

STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 156

24p



MORE THAN A ROBOT! MORE THAN A KILLING MACHINE! IT WAS ...

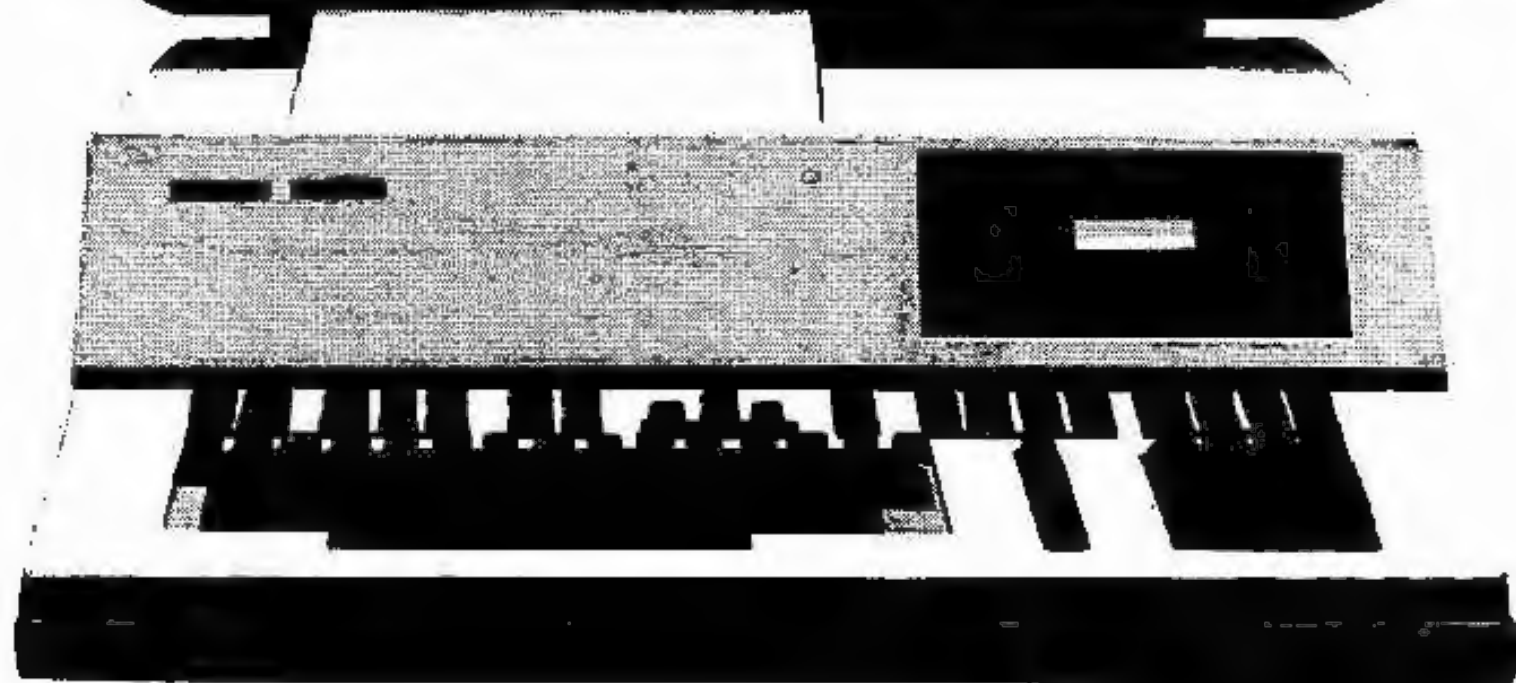
THE SYGMA WARRIOR

... AND IT WAS MAD.

STARBLAZER

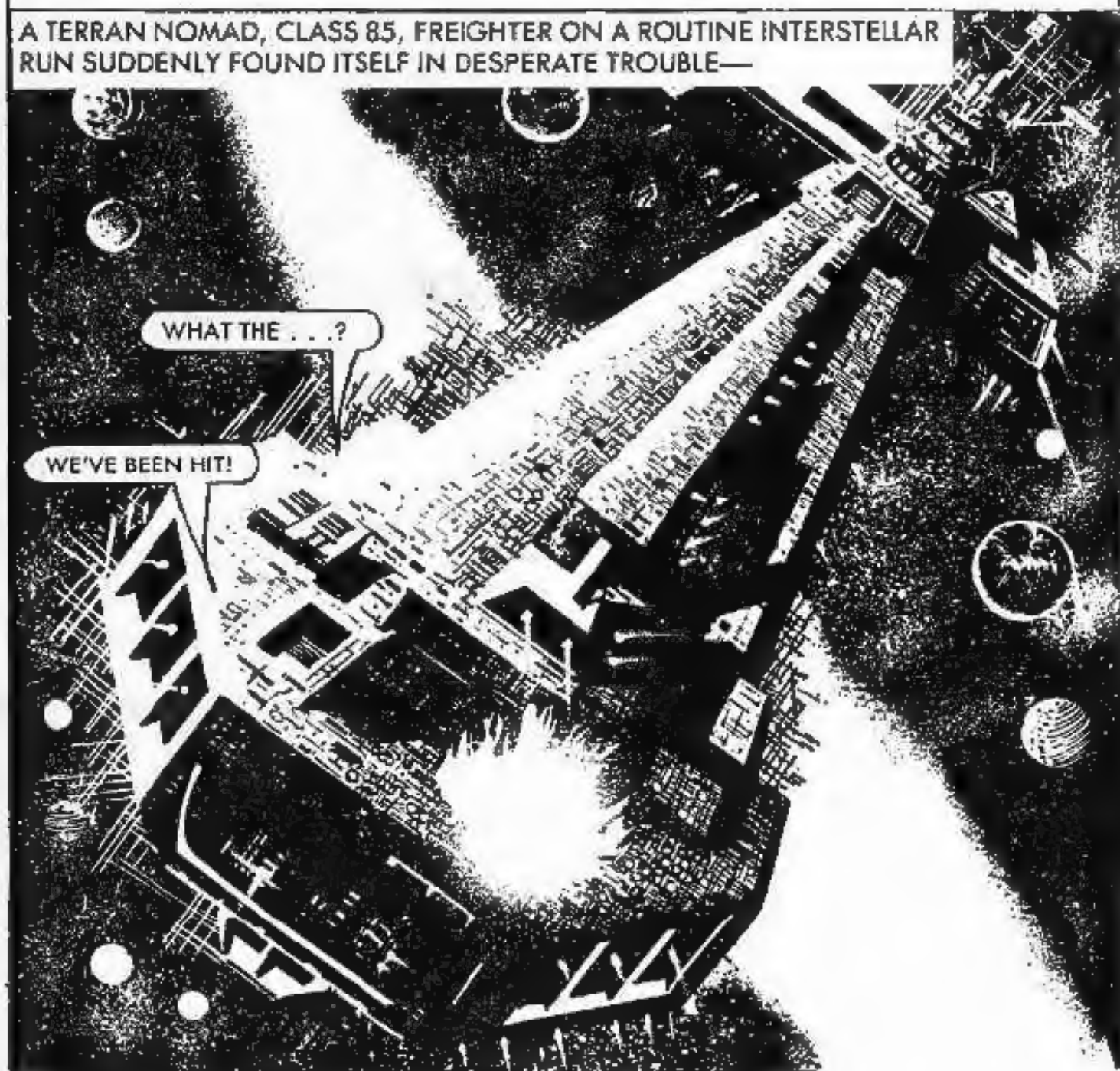
The Fourth Thermal War had been over for more than 900 years — peace reigned in The Galaxy. The Terran Empire had outlawed all forms of armed conflict and most weapons had been banned. Only a small, lightly protected Empire Defence Force remained, with little to fear from the odd space smuggler who surrendered without a struggle. Peace and prosperity had dulled Man's aggressive instincts.

But on June 20th, 3985 in quadrant 907 something happened to change all that—



THE SYGMA WARRIOR

A TERRAN NOMAD, CLASS 85, FREIGHTER ON A ROUTINE INTERSTELLAR
RUN SUDDENLY FOUND ITSELF IN DESPERATE TROUBLE—





THE DISTRESS SIGNAL WENT OUT BUT BY THE TIME IT HAD BEEN SENT, NOTHING REMAINED OF THE FREIGHTER.



A FEW PARSECS AWAY—

I'VE PICKED UP A GENERAL
DISTRESS CALL, SIR! QUADRANT 907.

PROCEED AT WARP
SPEED, MINUS TWO!

MAJOR GOTH WAS COMMANDER OF ALPHA FLIGHT IN THE EMPIRE DEFENCE FORCE—

THERE'S ONLY CARGO SHIPS SCHEDULED FOR
THIS SECTOR . . .

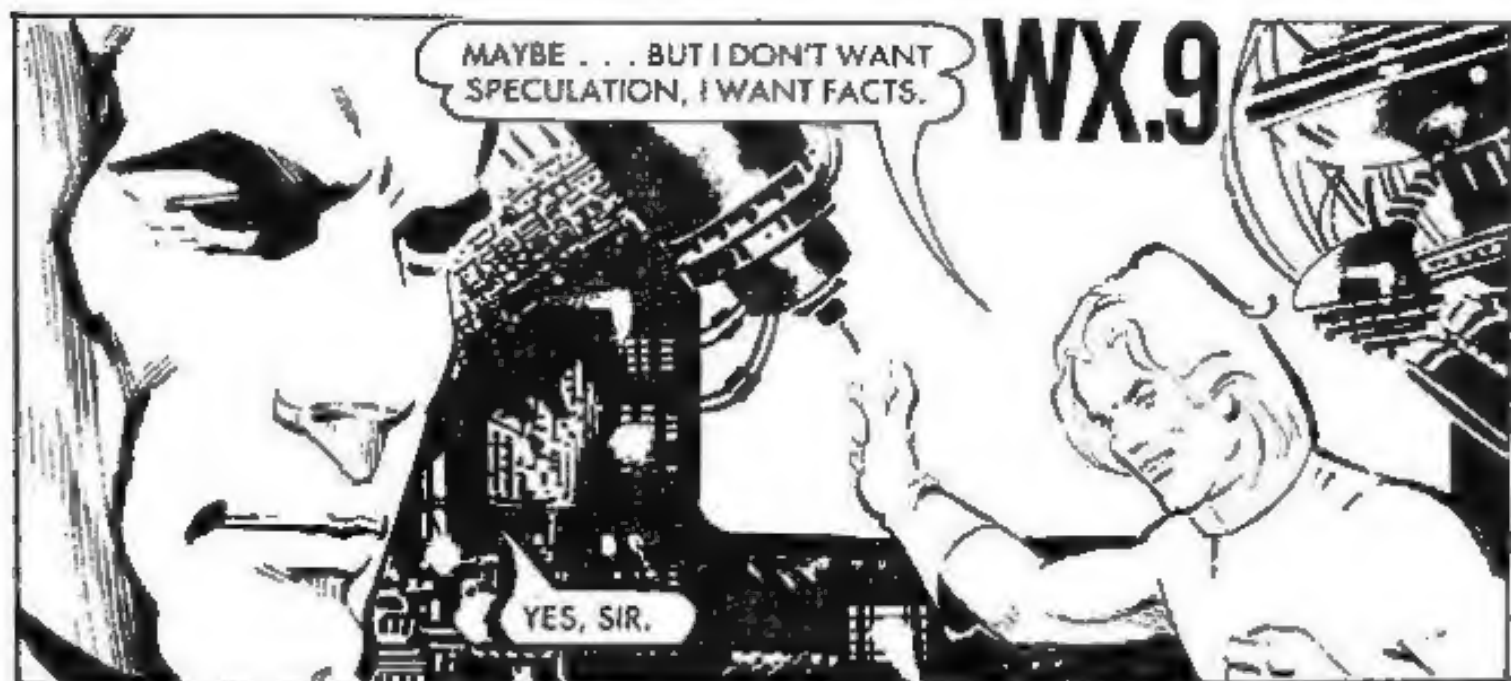
THE SHIPS TOOK ONLY A FEW HOURS TO REACH THE SPOT.

WE'RE HERE, SIR.

SENSORS PICKING UP SMALL RESIDUE OF DEBRIS. ANALYSIS INDICATES METALLIC COMPOUNDS.

THERE IT IS!
HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

EXPLOSION, SIR OR SHOULD I SAY—IMPLOSION!
SEE HOW THE DEBRIS IS NOT SCATTERED. AN
EXPLOSION WOULD HAVE BLASTED THAT ACROSS
THE GALAXY.





FACT ONE, MISTER KRAL —A MEGADRIVE WOULD EXPLODE SCATTERING DEBRIS OVER A WIDE AREA. THE NAVIGATOR SAID THAT DEBRIS IS NOT SCATTERED, WHICH INDICATES THAT IT WAS AN IMPLOSION . . .

IN ANOTHER QUADRANT A STRANGE CRAFT STAYED JUST OUT OF SENSOR RANGE OF A NEARBY PLANET. A PLANET OWNED BY THE EMPIRE'S LARGEST MINING CORPORATION—RIO ZIRCONCIUM.



ON THE PLANET'S SURFACE—



JUST THEN, AN EXPLOSION CAUSED A FEW MORE MALFUNCTIONS—





THE MYSTERIOUS ATTACK WAS
BRUTALLY EFFECTIVE—



14 UNITS LATER MAJOR GOTH'S SECTION ARRIVED TO INVESTIGATE THE SUDDEN CESSATION
OF TRANSMISSIONS—

SENSORS INDICATE NO LIFE
FORMS ON PLANET SURFACE, SIR.

IMPOSSIBLE! THAT MINING PLANET HAD 500
MEN. I'LL TAKE A SCOUTING PARTY DOWN IN
THE SHUTTLE.

THE MINING COMPLEX LAY IN RUINS—

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN HIT
BY A MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE!



GOTH TOOK DOWN A SQUAD—



THIS WAS NO NATURAL DISASTER, SIR. MY
SCANNERS ARE PICKING UP EVIDENCE OF
HIGH-ENERGY WEAPON DISCHARGE.

CAN'T BE!

HIGH ENERGY WEAPONS WERE
BANNED AFTER THE GALACTIC CIVIL
WAR. NONE ARE MADE NOW.



ABOARD GOTH'S SHIP—

I'M PICKING UP A SHIP ON
LONG RANGE SENSORS, SIR!

YOU'D BETTER
HAVE A LOOK AT THIS.

TARGET ON STARBOARD BEAM, RANGE: 6.5 PARSECS . . . AND
CLOSING. CRAFT HAS UNKNOWN CONFIGURATION. NO LIFE
FORMS ABOARD. DATA INCOMPLETE FOR IDENTIFICATION . . .
PLEASE STAND BY WHILE MAIN COMPUTER CHECKS RECORDS
CENTRE. THANK YOU.



THE SUDDEN SURGE OF SPEED LEFT THE MISSILES NO TIME TO CHANGE COURSE.

THEY MISSED,
BUT ONLY JUST!

I SUGGEST WE GET
OUT OF HERE, SIR!


NO! WE'RE GOING TO
ATTACK!



GIVE THE BATTLE COMPUTER OUR
PRESENT POSITION—THEN ALERT THE
REST OF THE FLIGHT. WE WILL CO-
ORDINATE THE ASSAULT FROM HERE.

YES, SIR!

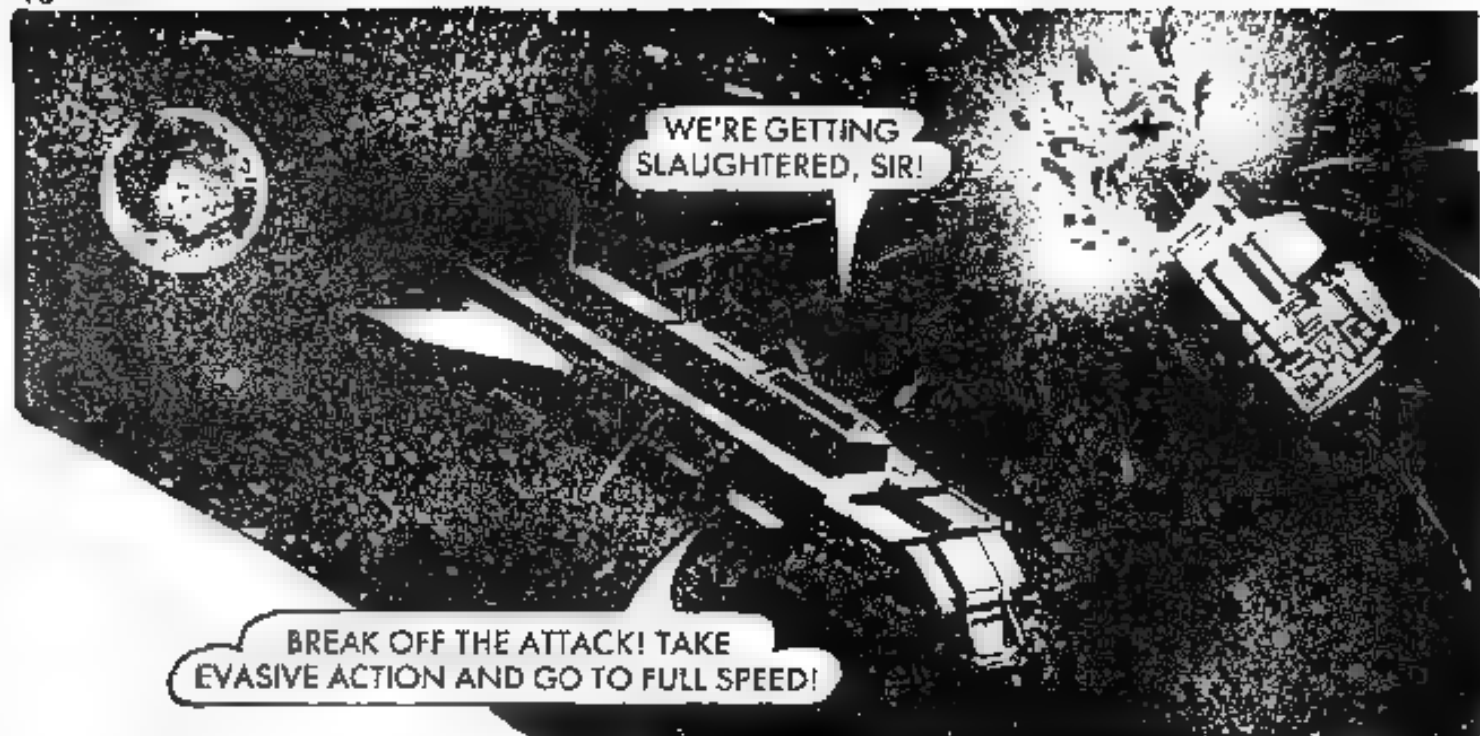
BUT...



OUR LASER BEAMS ARE JUST
BOUNCING OFF! SHE MUST HAVE
PUT A FORCE SHIELD UP!

THE MYSTERIOUS CRAFT RETALIATED WITH LETHAL PRECISION---





FEAR BEGAN TO GRIP MAJOR GOTH AND THE CREW OF THE LAST REMAINING PATROL SHIP—



THE CRAFT WARPED AWAY—

THEY ARE OUT OF EFFECTIVE
RANGE, LEADER.

IT IS OF NO CONSEQUENCE. NO DOUBT
WE SHALL MEET THEM AGAIN. RESUME
PATROL STATUS—ALERT LEVEL THREE.

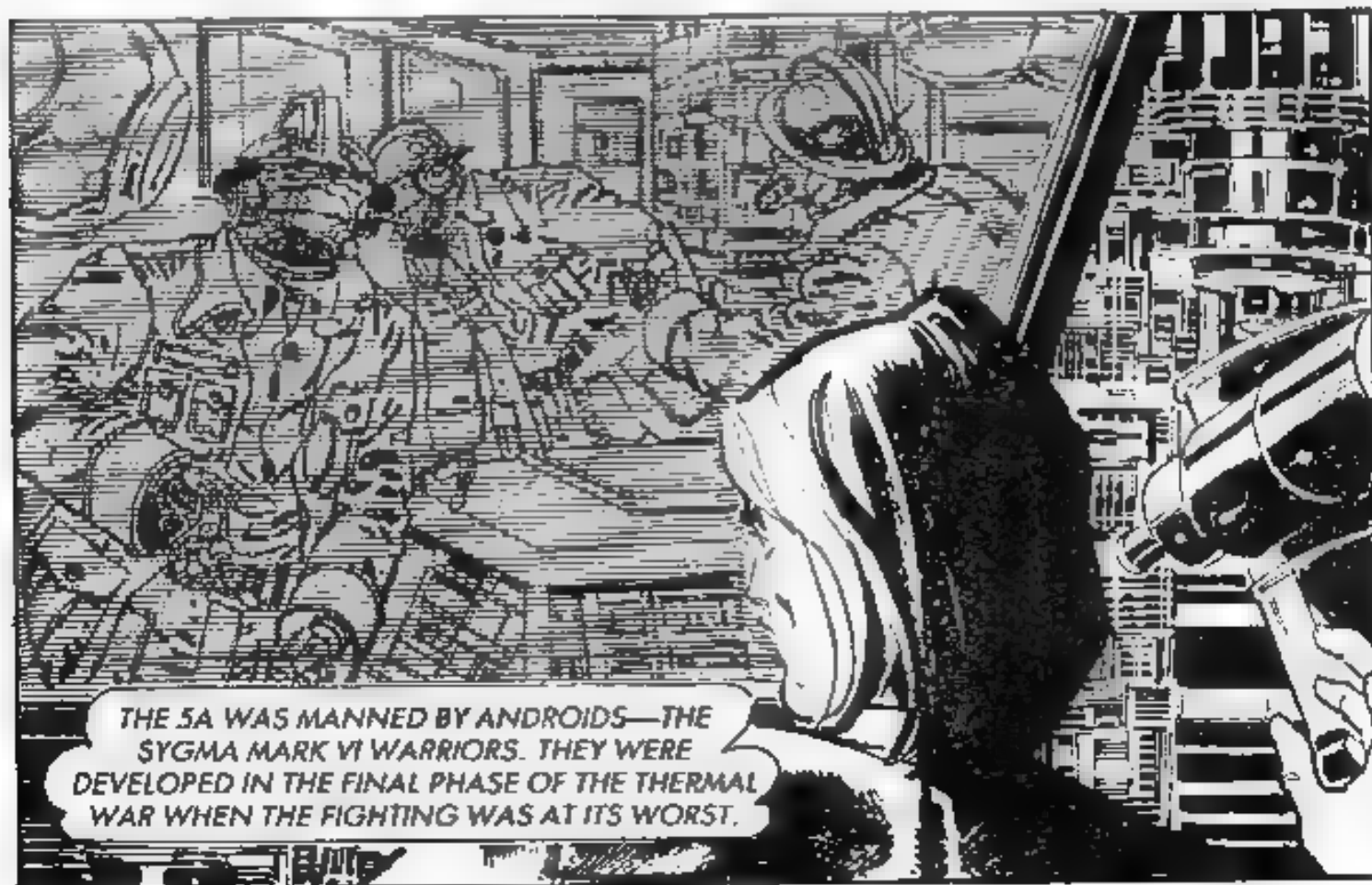
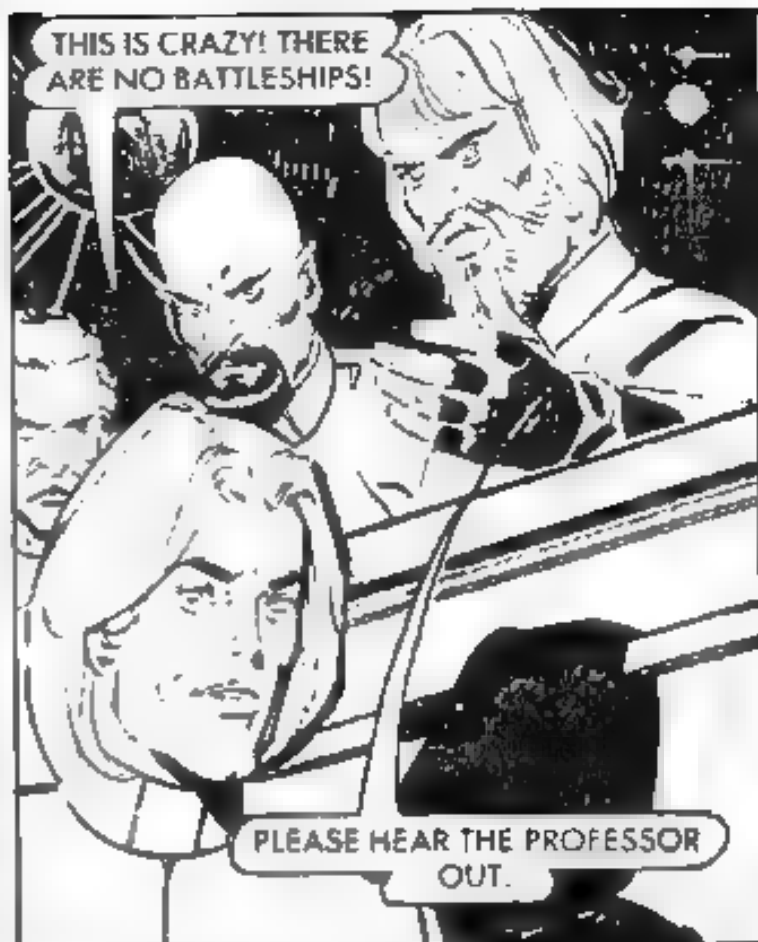
GOTH REPORTED TO E.D.F. COMMAND
HEADQUARTERS—

IT MUST HAVE BEEN A GREAT SHOCK
FOR YOU, MAJOR GOTH. WE COULD
SCARCELY BELIEVE IT OURSELVES.

THREE SHIPS—BLOWN TO BITS!
THEY NEVER STOOD A CHANCE.







ONE OF THE BATTLESHIPS VANISHED WITHOUT
TRACE. IT WAS A COMPLETE MYSTERY. IT WAS
LAST SEEN FIGHTING NEAR THE DAGOS
SYSTEM . . .





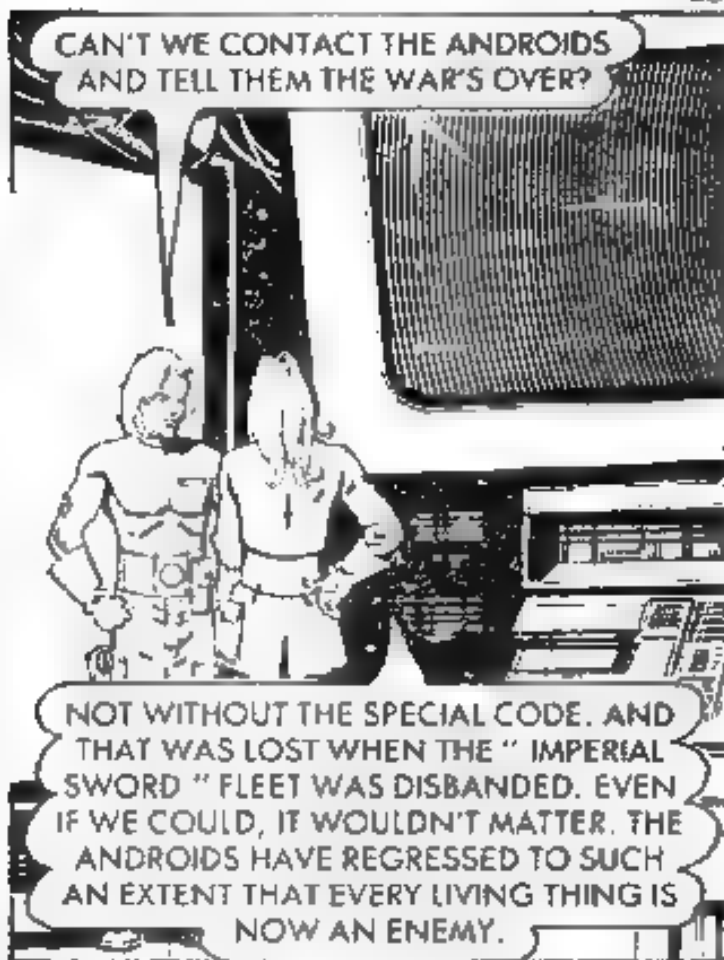
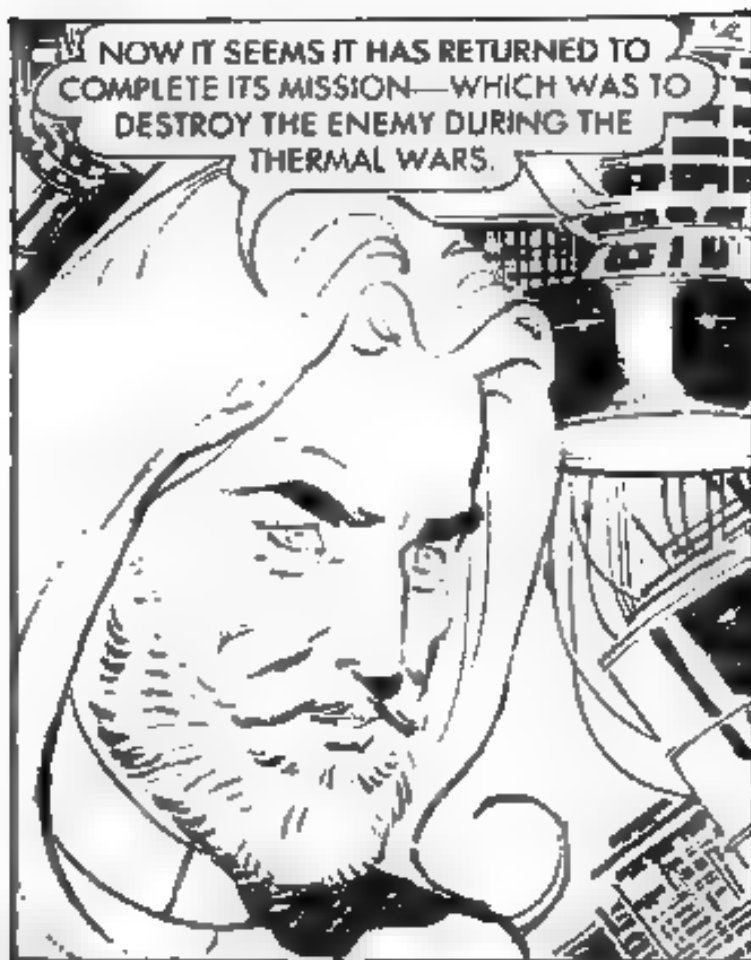
THEN IT HEADED OUT
INTO DEEP SPACE.

FULL POWER! LOOK
IN MAIN BOOSTERS!



THE THEORY IS IT RAN INTO A FREAK SPACE
WARP AND WAS TRANSPORTED BILLIONS OF
LIGHT YEARS AWAY PERHAPS TO ANOTHER
UNIVERSE

SOMETHING IS
WRONG, LEADER!



AT THAT MOMENT, AN EMPIRE DEFENCE FORCE OUTPOST ON ABERNYTE FOUND ITSELF UNDER ATTACK—



A HUGE CRAFT LANDED—


DO NOT DESTROY THE BUILDING.
WE NEED TO CHECK THEIR DATA BANKS.

VERY WELL,
LEADER.



THE ANDROIDS WERE WEARING ANTI-LASER ARMOUR—AND THEY WERE ARMED WITH THE MORE DESTRUCTIVE HIGH-ENERGY BEAM RIFLES.

JUPE . . . WHAT
ARE THEY?



FOOLS! THEY CANNOT HOPE
TO STOP A SYGMA WARRIOR!

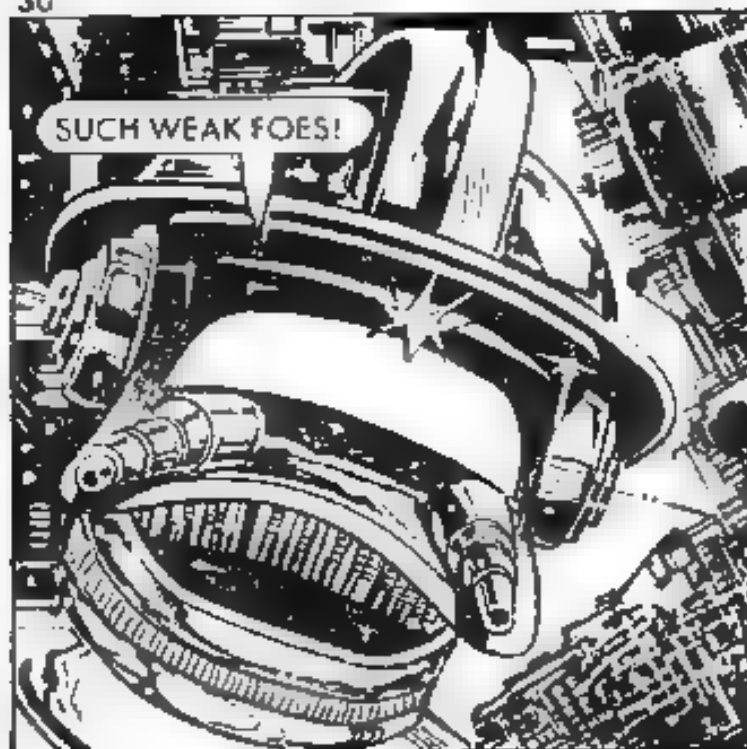


THE OUTPOST WAS SOON CAPTURED.

IT HAS ALL
CHANGED, LEADER

WE HAVE BEEN
AWAY A LONG TIME

I HAVE FOUND THE BASE. THAT IS
OUR NEXT TARGET—TO STRIKE AT
THE VERY HEART OF THE ENEMY.



MEANWHILE ON THE RESEARCH PLANET . . .



WHEN WAR WAS BANNED IT WAS
DECIDED TO KEEP A SMALL MUSEUM TO
REMINDE THOSE IN POWER OF THE
FUTILITY OF ARMED CONFLICT.





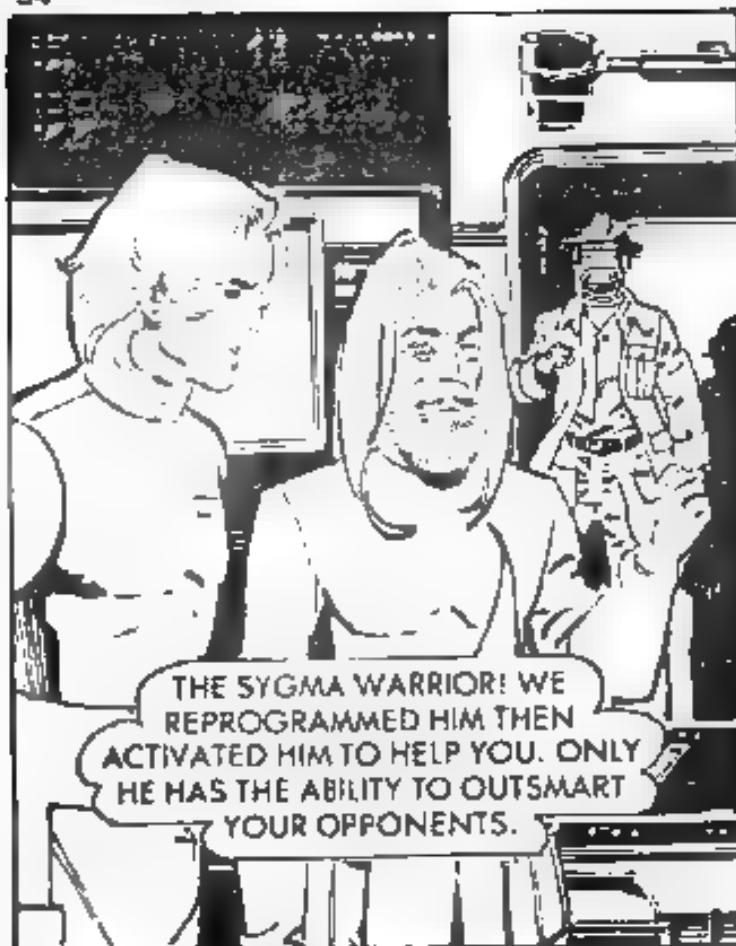
THE ONLY WAY TO DEFEAT THE SYGMA WARRIOR WAS TO OUT-THINK IT—



GOTH WAS CAREFULLY PREPARED—







TIME WAS RUNNING OUT AS THE SYGMA VI CRAFT APPROACHED—

TARGETS LOCKED AND DESTROYED, LEADER!

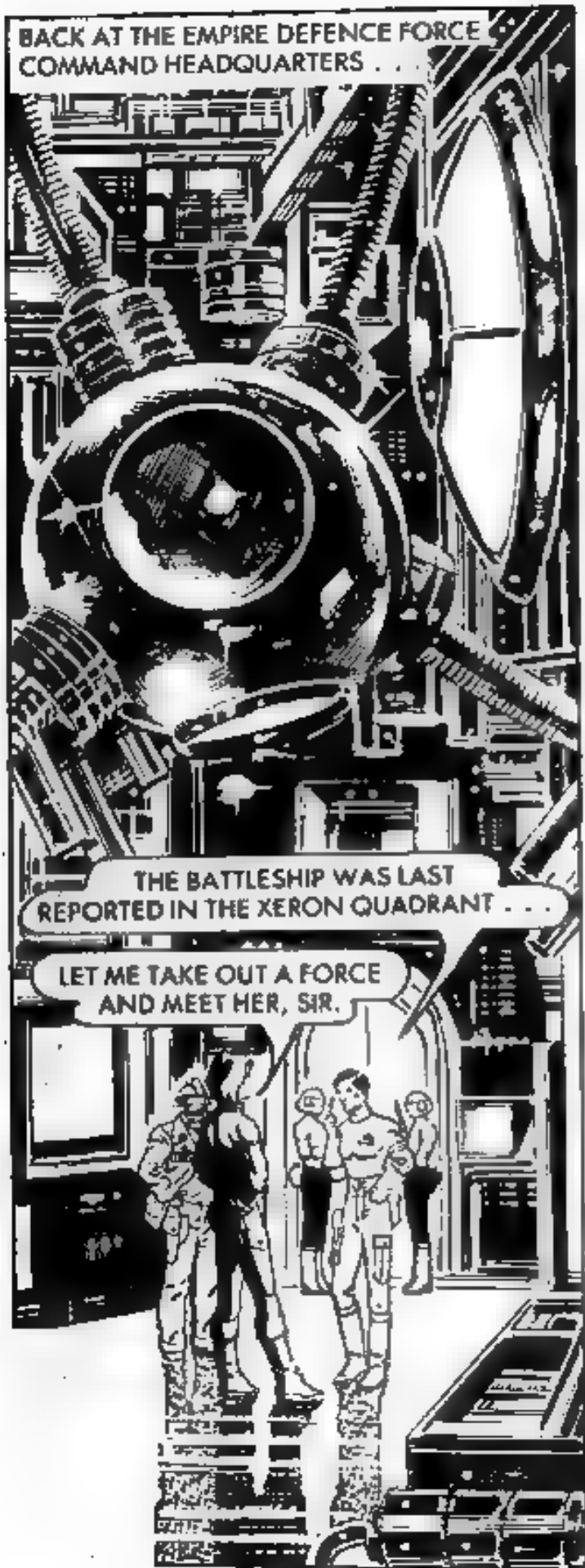
GOOD! IT IS PLEASING TO SEE OUR LONG JOURNEY HAS NOT DULLED OUR ABILITIES.



BACK AT THE EMPIRE DEFENCE FORCE
COMMAND HEADQUARTERS . . .

THE BATTLESHIP WAS LAST
REPORTED IN THE XERON QUADRANT . . .

LET ME TAKE OUT A FORCE
AND MEET HER, SIR.



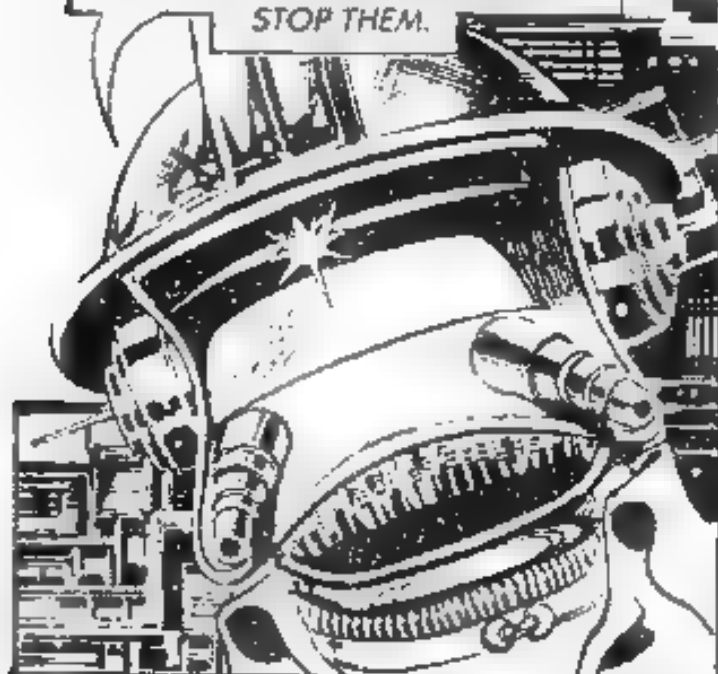
NO! THAT WOULD
BE FOOLISH.

EXPLAIN YOURSELF,
ANDROID.



THE ANDROID'S VOICE HAD A CHILLING RING TO IT—

THEY WILL BE SEEKING YOUR MAIN BASE—WHICH IS HERE. IT'S THE ONLY LOGICAL STEP THEY CAN MAKE. YOU ARE POWERLESS TO STOP THEM.

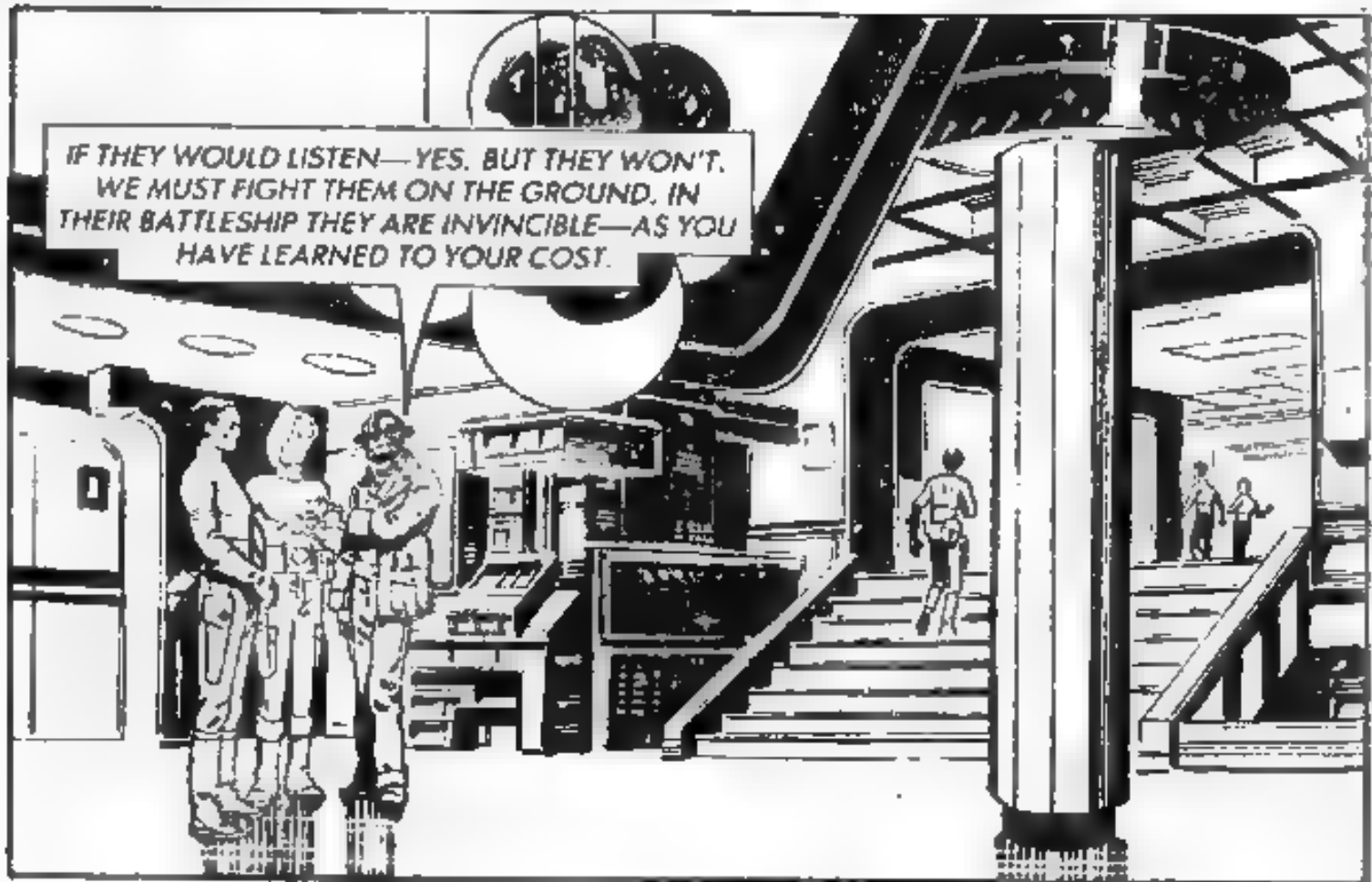


I'VE SEEN HOW WEAK YOUR EMPIRE HAS BECOME. IF YOU TRY TO OPPOSE THEM IN SPACE THEY WILL WIPE YOU OUT.



SO WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST—
SURRENDER?

IF THEY WOULD LISTEN—YES. BUT THEY WON'T. WE MUST FIGHT THEM ON THE GROUND. IN THEIR BATTLESHIP THEY ARE INVINCIBLE—AS YOU HAVE LEARNED TO YOUR COST.



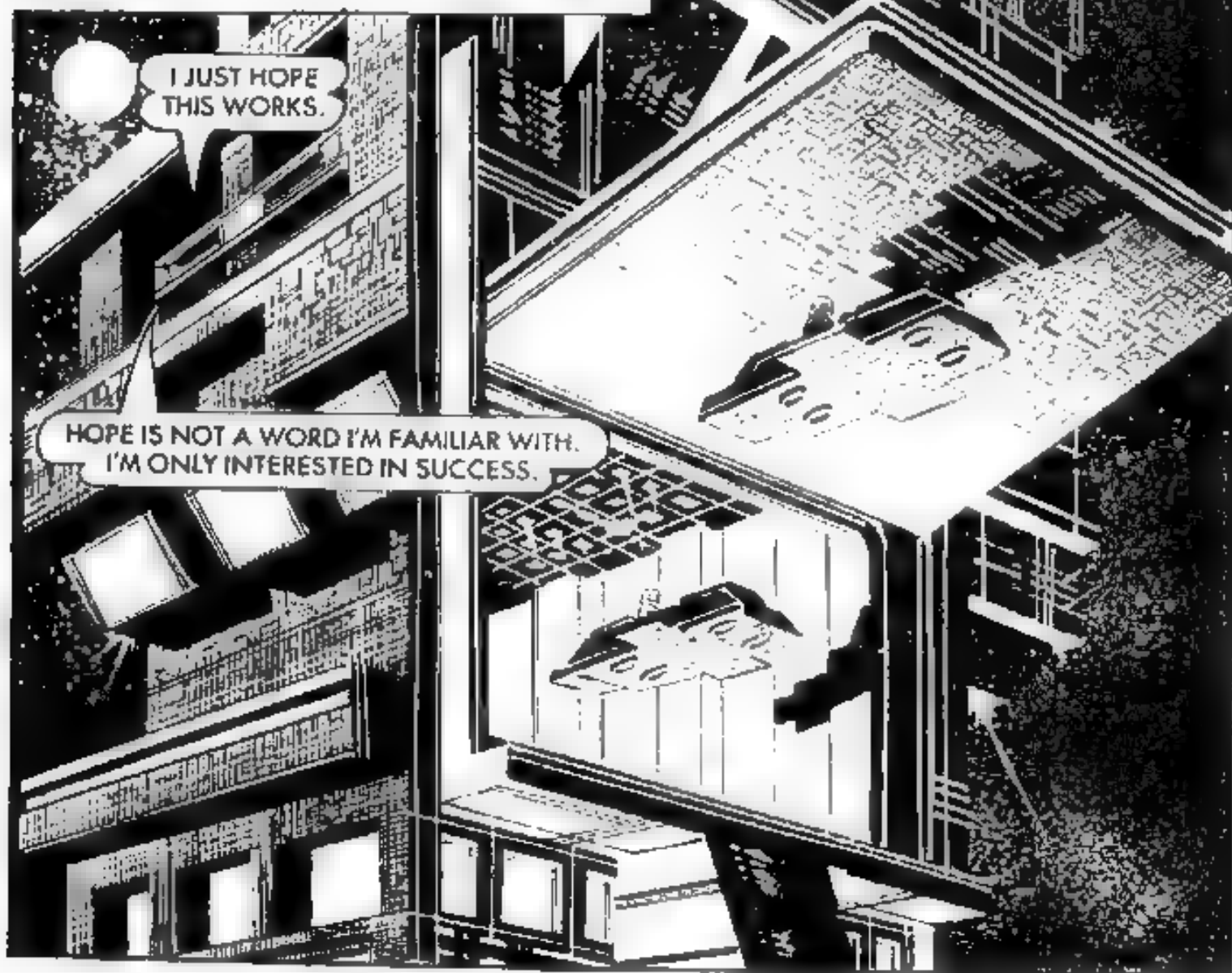
THE HIGH COUNCIL HAD PLACED GOTH IN CHARGE OF THE CAMPAIGN.

HE'S RIGHT, SIR! I SUGGEST WE EVACUATE ALL PERSONNEL AND SET UP DEFENSIVE POSITIONS IN THE HILLS.

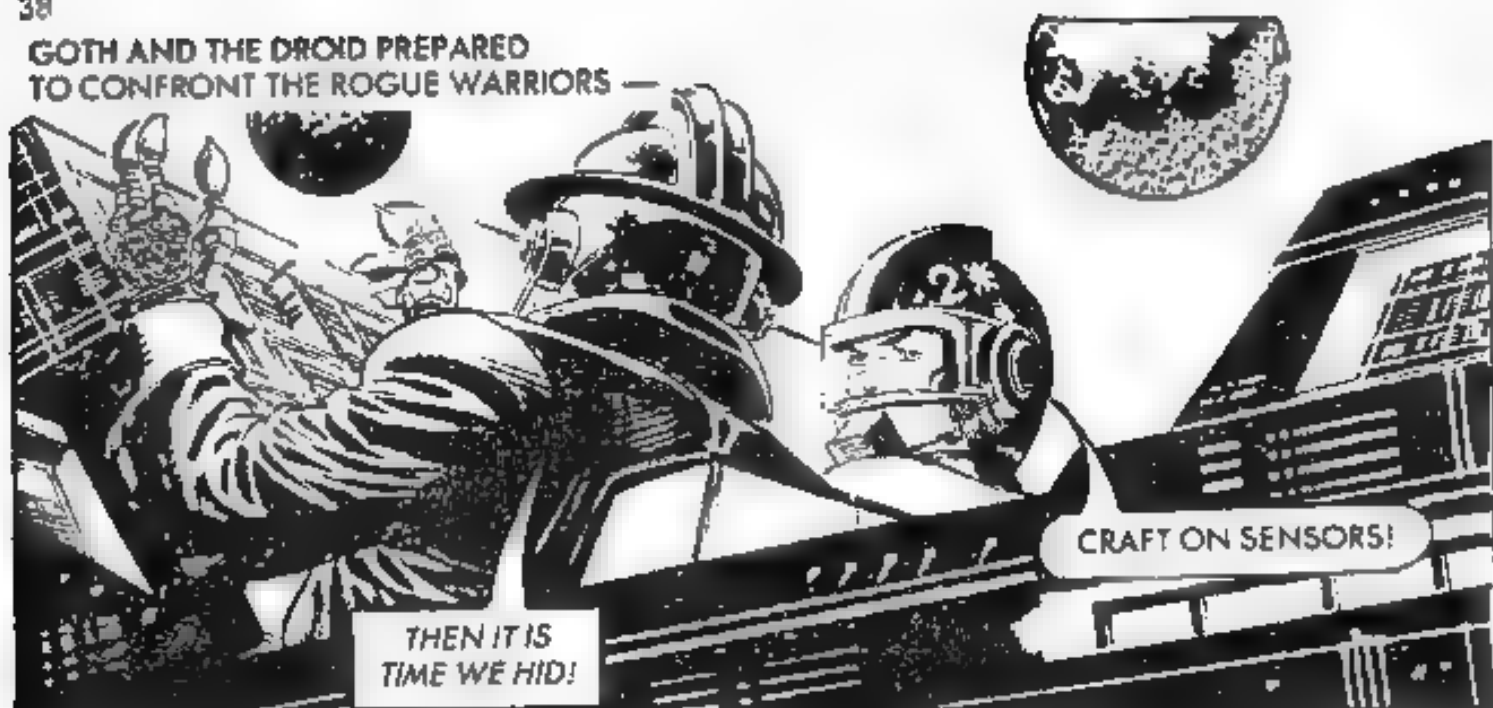
I'LL GIVE THE ORDER.

I JUST HOPE THIS WORKS.

HOPE IS NOT A WORD I'M FAMILIAR WITH. I'M ONLY INTERESTED IN SUCCESS.



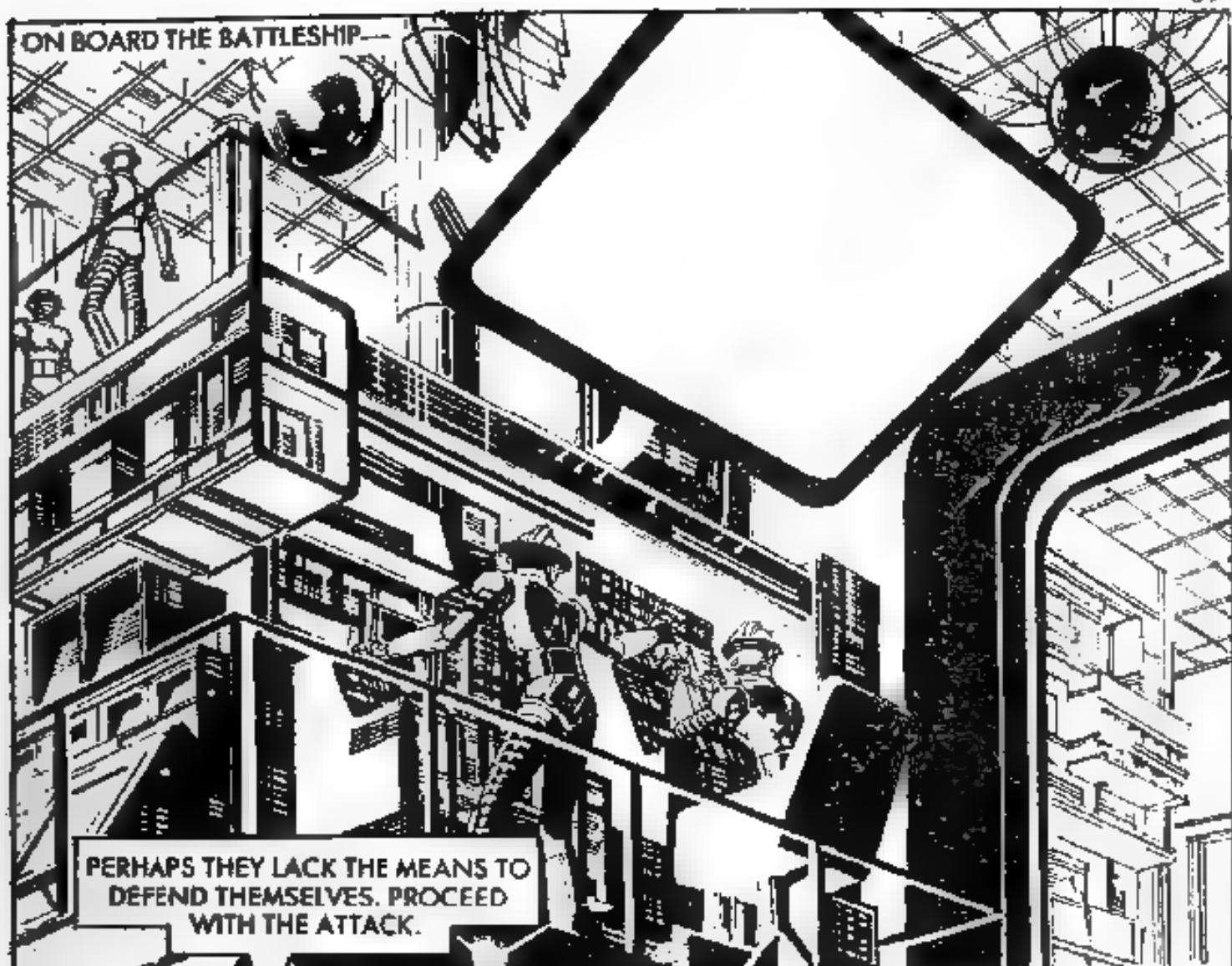
GOth AND THE DROID PREPARED
TO CONFRONT THE ROGUE WARRIORS —



GOth AND THE OTHERS DIDN'T HAVE LONG TO WAIT.



ON BOARD THE BATTLESHIP—



PERHAPS THEY LACK THE MEANS TO
DEFEND THEMSELVES. PROCEED
WITH THE ATTACK.

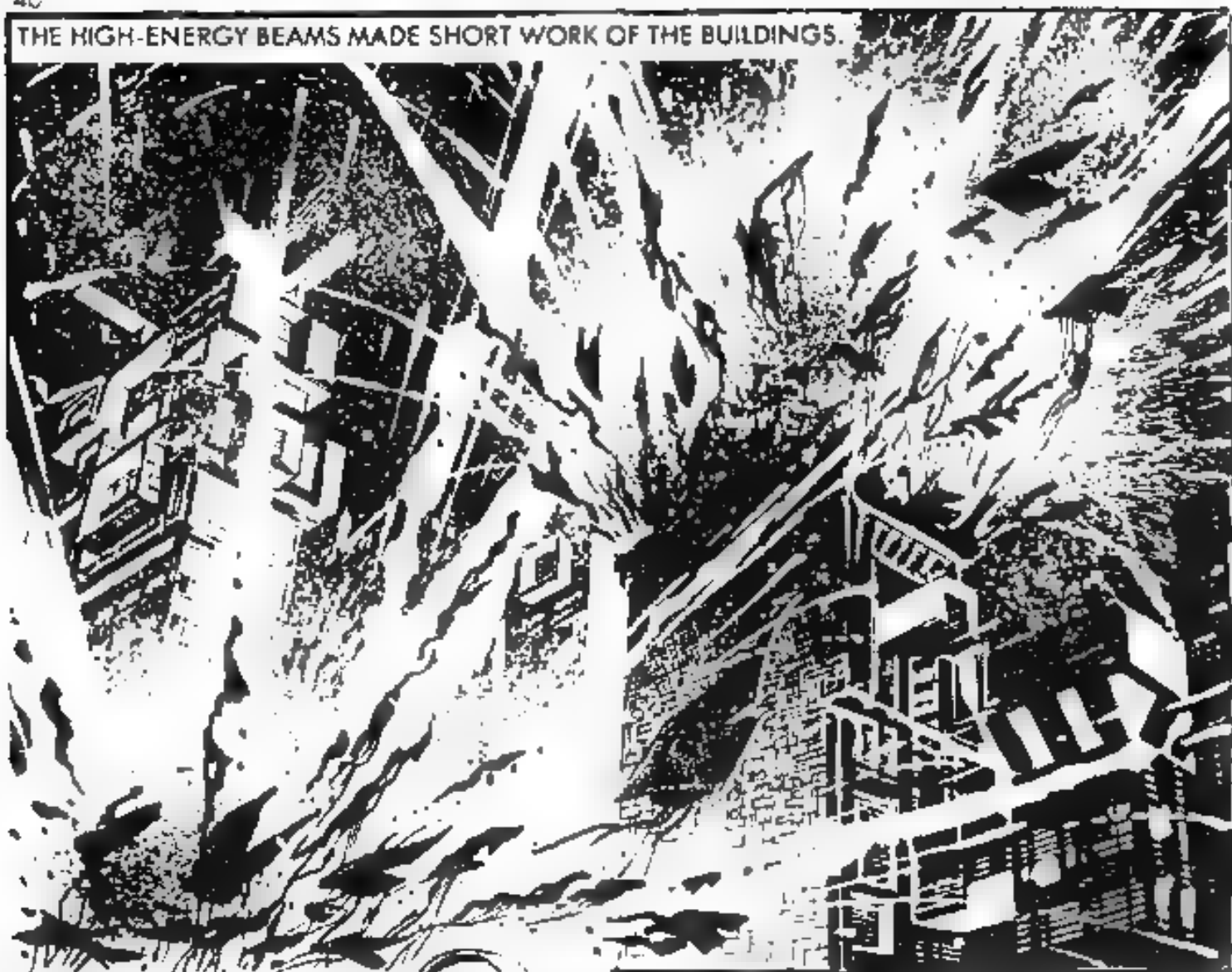


THE BOMBARDMENT BEGAN . . .



BY THE MOONS OF SYRIUS! WE
GOT OUT OF THERE JUST IN TIME!

THE HIGH-ENERGY BEAMS MADE SHORT WORK OF THE BUILDINGS.



IT DIDN'T TAKE THEM LONG TO RAZE THAT PLACE TO THE GROUND!



OF COURSE NOT! YOU HAVE JUST WITNESSED AN EXAMPLE OF THE EFFICIENT USE OF FORCE.



THE BEAM HIT WITH DEADLY ACCURACY—



THEY'VE SPOTTED US!

GOTH SAW THE SHUTTLE LAND NOT FAR AWAY.

GET READY, MEN! THEY'RE GOING TO ATTACK US ON FOOT.

THIS IS WHERE I MUST LEAVE YOU, MAJOR.

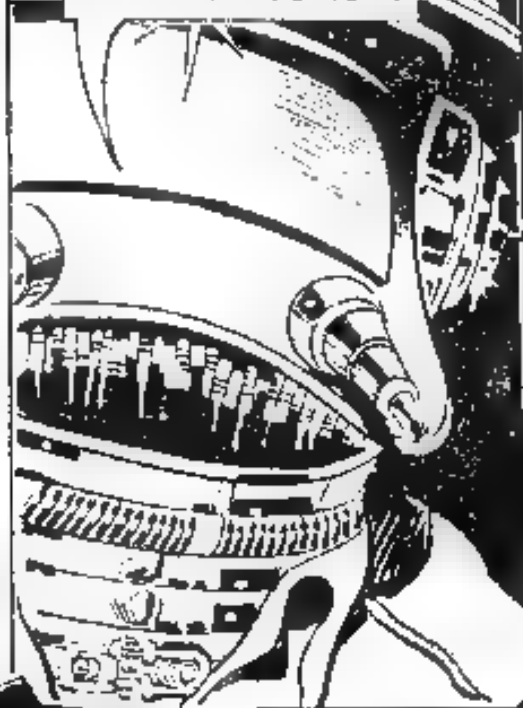
FOR A MOMENT GOTH FEARED THE ANDROID WAS DESERTING THEM TO JOIN ITS OWN KIND—



RELAX, HUMAN. I HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMED TO DEFEND YOU. I MERELY INTEND TO TAKE THAT SHUTTLE AND CAPTURE THE BATTLESHIP.

ALONE?

THEIR SHIP HAS A CREW OF ONLY TWENTY—AND MOST OF THEM WILL BE DOWN HERE IN THE ATTACK PARTY. I DO NOT EXPECT TO FIND MUCH OPPOSITION.



THEIR SENSORS WILL INDICATE AN ANDROID ABOARD THE SHUTTLE—AND THEY'LL ASSUME IT'S ONE OF THEIRS.



GOOD THINKING.

THE ATTACK BEGAN . . .

CONCENTRATE YOUR LASERS ON
ONE TARGET—THAT WAY YOU'LL
GET THROUGH THEIR BODY ARMOUR.

YES, SIR!





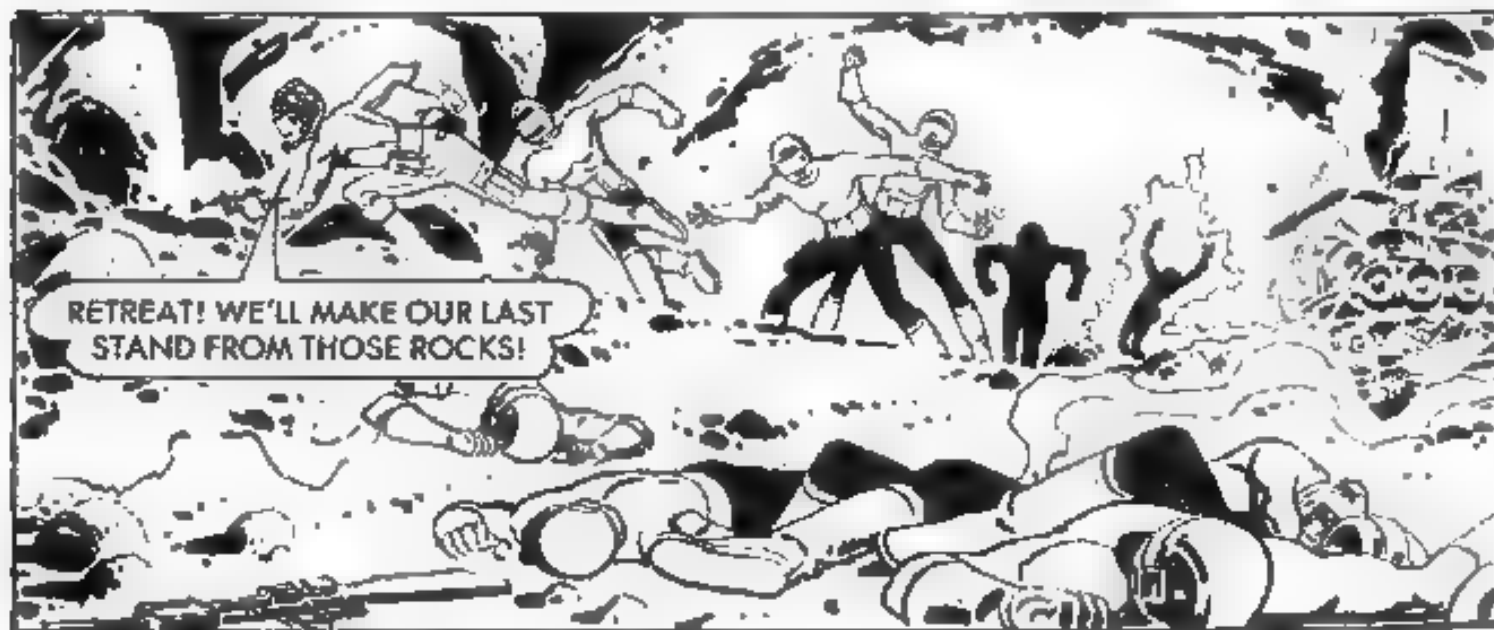
BUT GOTH'S JOY WAS SHORT LIVED AS THE ANDROIDS PRESSED HOME THEIR ATTACK—



THOSE ANDROIDS MAY ■ OVER 900 YEARS OLD—BUT THEY'RE BETTER THAN ANYTHING WE'VE GOT!



RETREAT! WE'LL MAKE OUR LAST STAND FROM THOSE ROCKS!





A FAMILIAR VOICE CAME THROUGH GOTH'S HELMET INTERCOM.

YOU MAY COME ABOARD WHENEVER YOU ARE READY, MAJOR GOTH. THE BATTLESHIP IS UNDER MY CONTROL. I'LL SEND THE SHUTTLE DOWN TO COLLECT YOU.




GOTH COULD HARDLY BELIEVE IT WAS ALL OVER—

THE ANDROID MUST HAVE TURNED THEIR GUNS AGAINST THEM!



AFTER GOTH HAD RESTED FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE NEURO-HELMET . . .

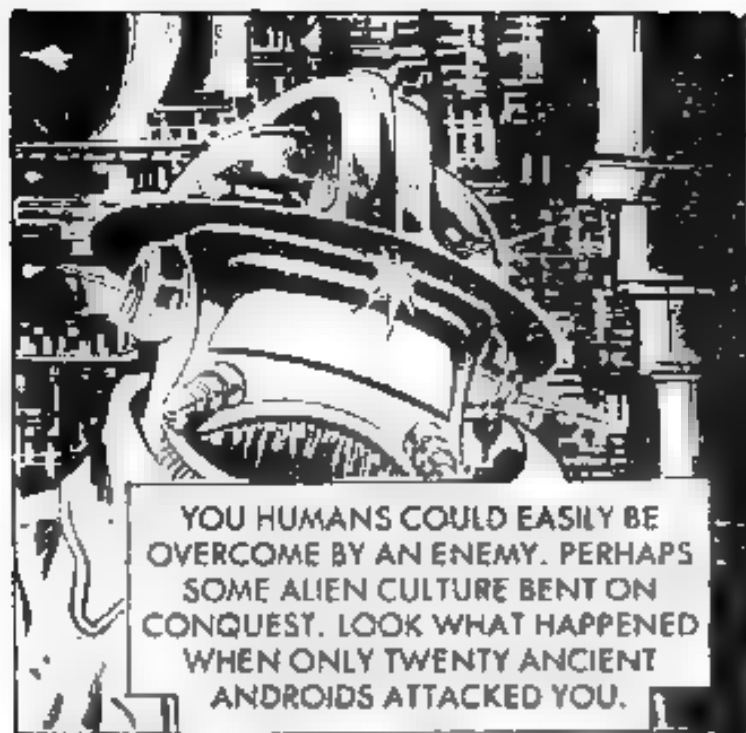


OUR NEXT JOB IS TO DESTROY THIS SHIP.

IF I MAY SAY THAT IS HIGHLY ILLOGICAL.



EXPLAIN!

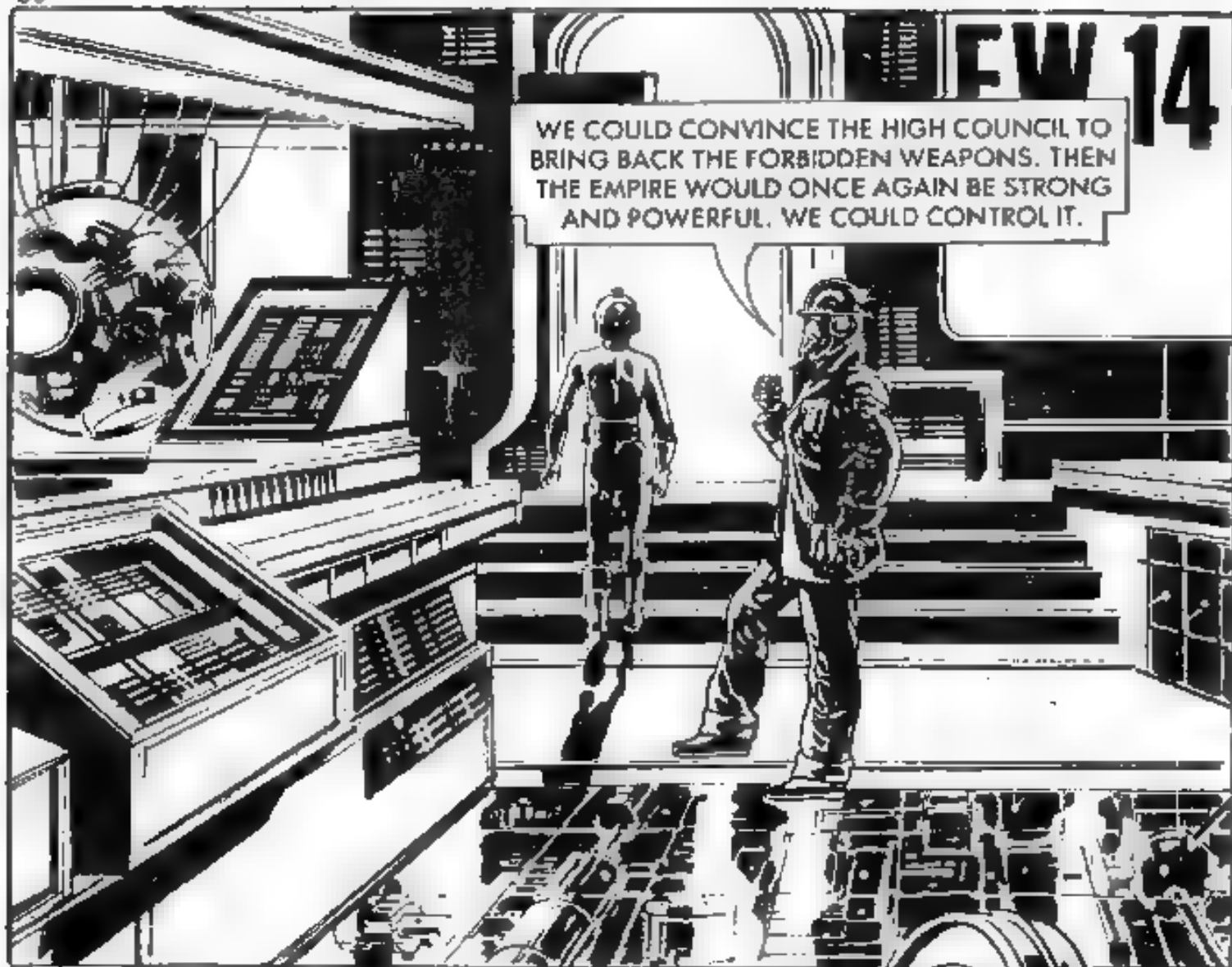


YOU HUMANS COULD EASILY BE OVERCOME BY AN ENEMY. PERHAPS SOME ALIEN CULTURE BENT ON CONQUEST. LOOK WHAT HAPPENED WHEN ONLY TWENTY ANCIENT ANDROIDS ATTACKED YOU.



SO WHAT ARE YOU SUGGESTING?

THAT WE JOIN FORCES
—YOU AND I.



WE COULD CONVINCE THE HIGH COUNCIL TO BRING BACK THE FORBIDDEN WEAPONS. THEN THE EMPIRE WOULD ONCE AGAIN BE STRONG AND POWERFUL. WE COULD CONTROL IT.



THEY WOULDN'T ACCEPT IT, MY FRIEND.

THEN YOU MUST TRY TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS. YOU HAVE TASTED THE FRUIT OF VICTORY—AND FOUND IT SWEET. WHY GIVE ALL THIS UP NOW?

IT WAS A NEW EXPERIENCE, BUT THE DESTRUCTION OF SO MANY PEOPLE IS NOT RIGHT, I'M NOT A MACHINE WITHOUT EMOTION. WAR IS WRONG . . .



THE ANDROID SENSED DANGER, BUT GOTH'S HELMET ENABLED HIM TO MATCH HIS OPPONENT'S SPEED.

WIIIIII

. . . AND YOU ARE A MACHINE BUILT FOR WAR.



IT WAS GOTH WHO FIRED FIRST.



I LOST A LOT OF GOOD MEN DOWN THERE!
SUCH THINGS MUST NEVER HAPPEN
AGAIN!

YOU FOOL!



MY ORDERS WERE TO
TERMINATE YOU.

LOGICAL. HAVING REACTIVATED ME,
THE HIGH COUNCIL MUST HAVE
REALISED I WOULD POSE A THREAT.

THE ANDROID DISPLAYED NO EMOTION—

YOU SAVED THE EMPIRE AND
DESERVE A BETTER REWARD.

SO WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO
WITH ME?

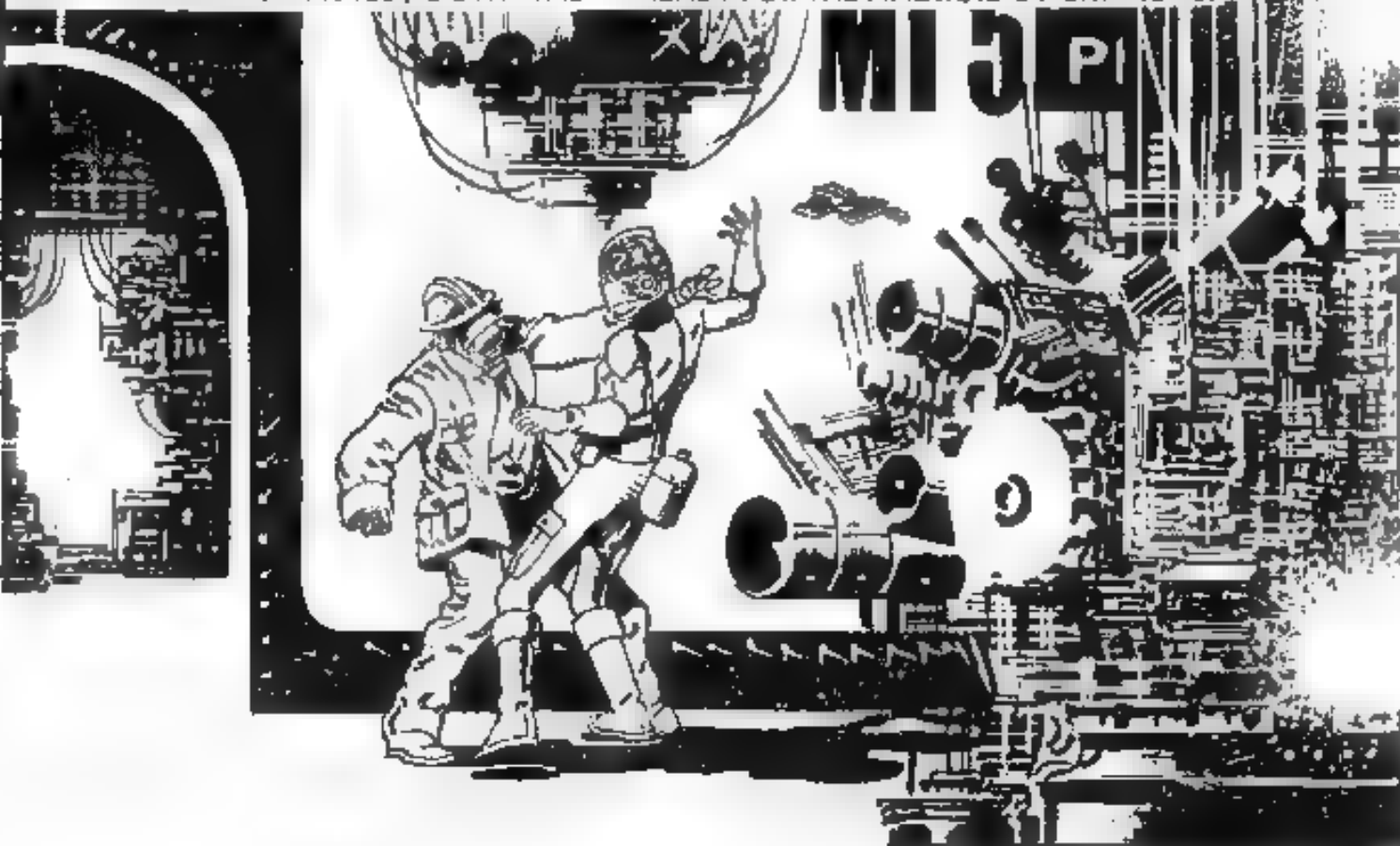
I'M GOING TO LET YOU GO. IF YOU
PROMISE TO LEAVE THIS GALAXY
AND NEVER RETURN.

VERY WELL,
MAJOR GOTH.

TO GOTH'S AMAZEMENT THE ANDROID SHOWED EMOTION.

I WILL TAKE THE EMERGENCY ESCAPE CRAFT. IT HAS SUFFICIENT FUEL FOR MY NEEDS. I'M GRATEFUL FOR THIS CHANCE YOU HAVE GIVEN ME.

MOMENTARILY DISTRACTED, GOTH WASN'T READY FOR THE ANDROID'S NEXT MOVE.





GOTH'S SPEED ENABLED HIM TO GET FREE. THE WALLS OF THE SHIP WERE PROTECTED AGAINST ENERGY BEAMS—OTHERWISE THE ANDROID'S SHOT COULD HAVE DEPRESSURISED THE ENTIRE SECTION.

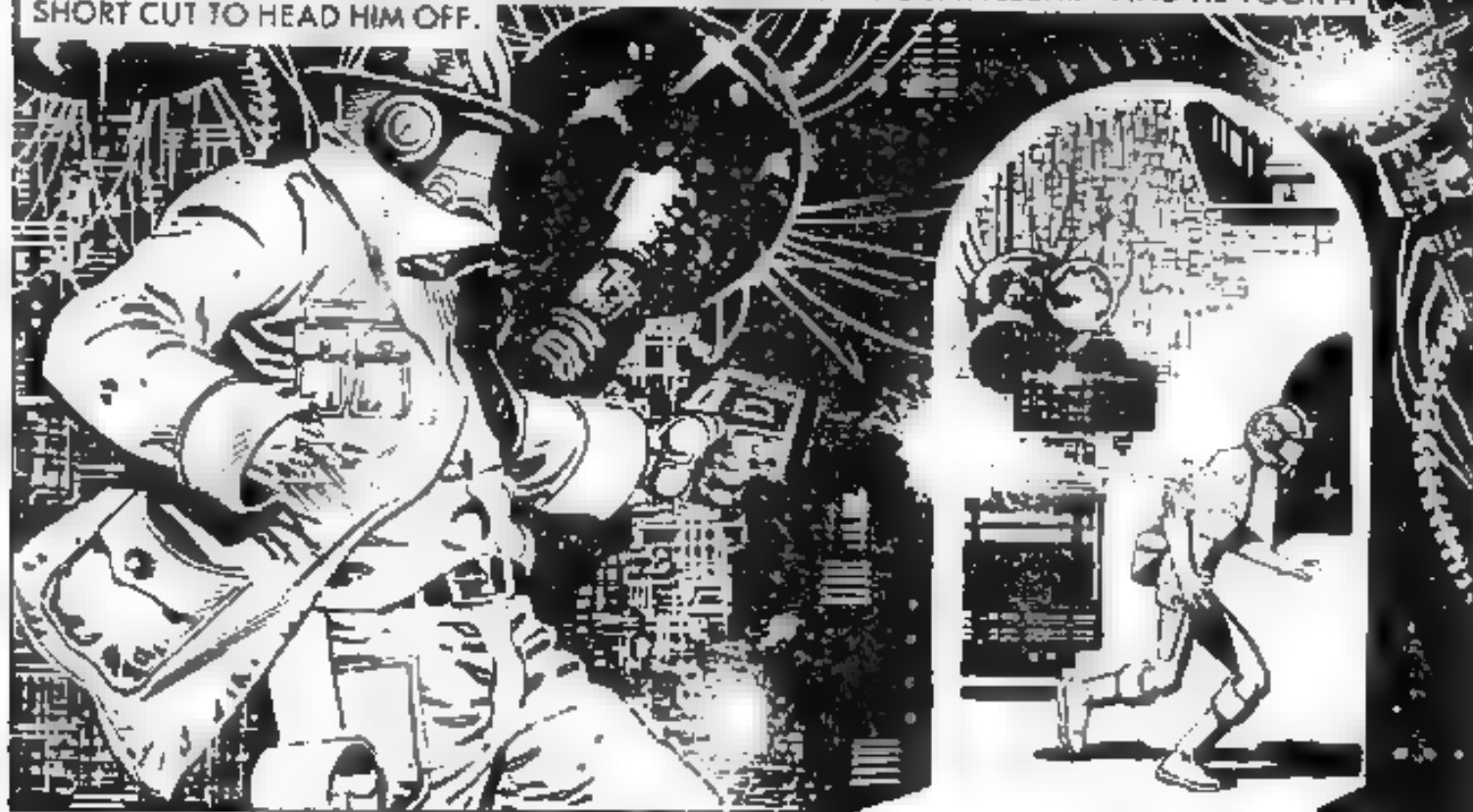


YOU CANNOT ESCAPE FROM
ME, MAJOR GOTH!

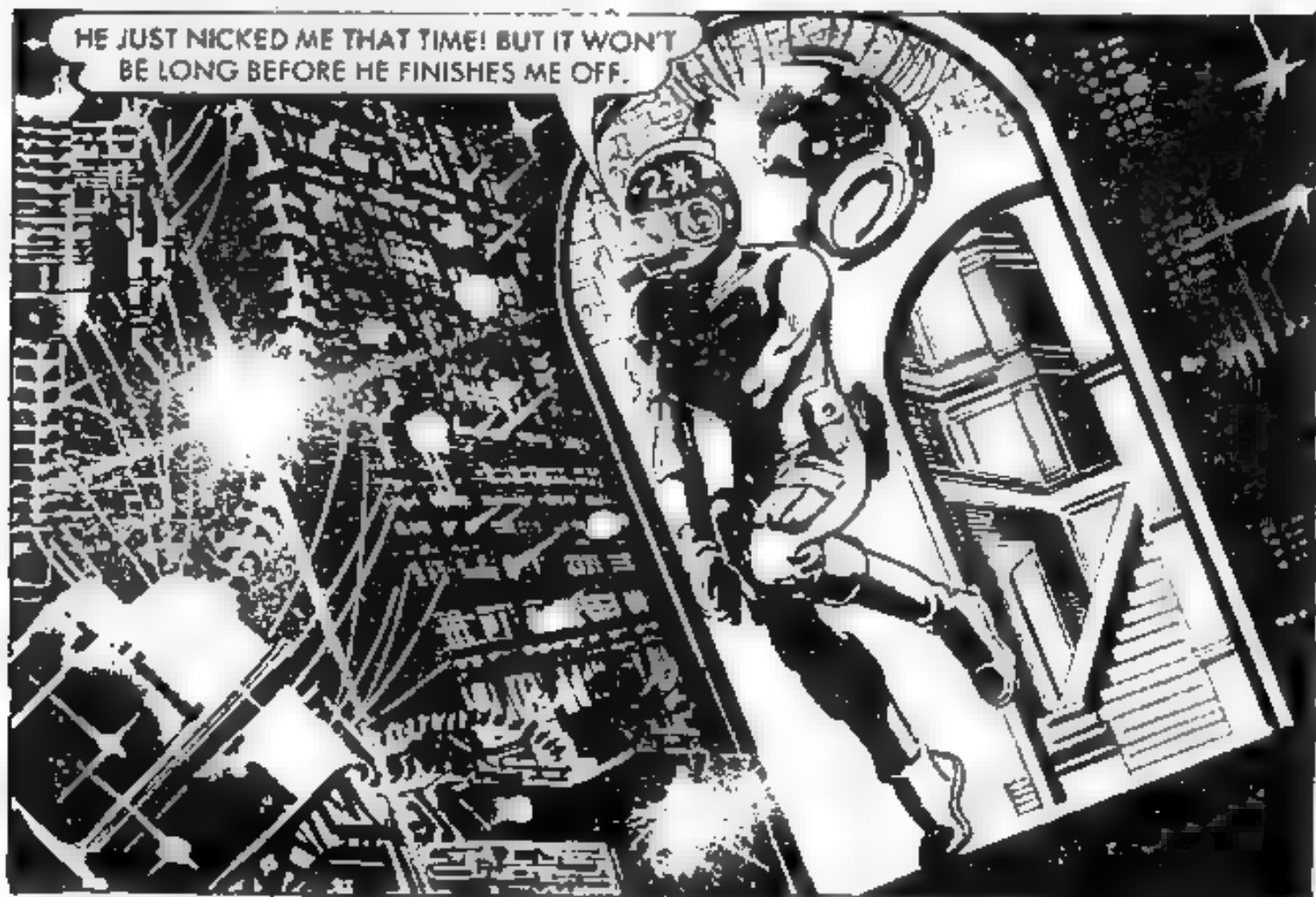


I MUST GET BACK TO THE CONTROL
ROOM! THERE ARE WEAPONS THERE.

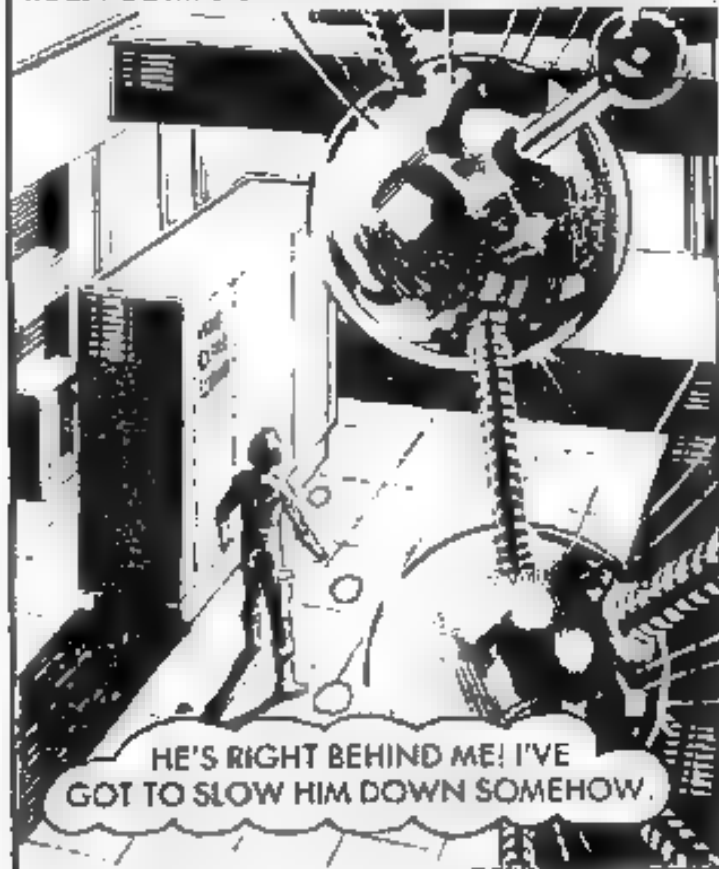
BUT THE ANDROID WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE LAYOUT OF THE BATTLESHIP AND HE TOOK A SHORT CUT TO HEAD HIM OFF.



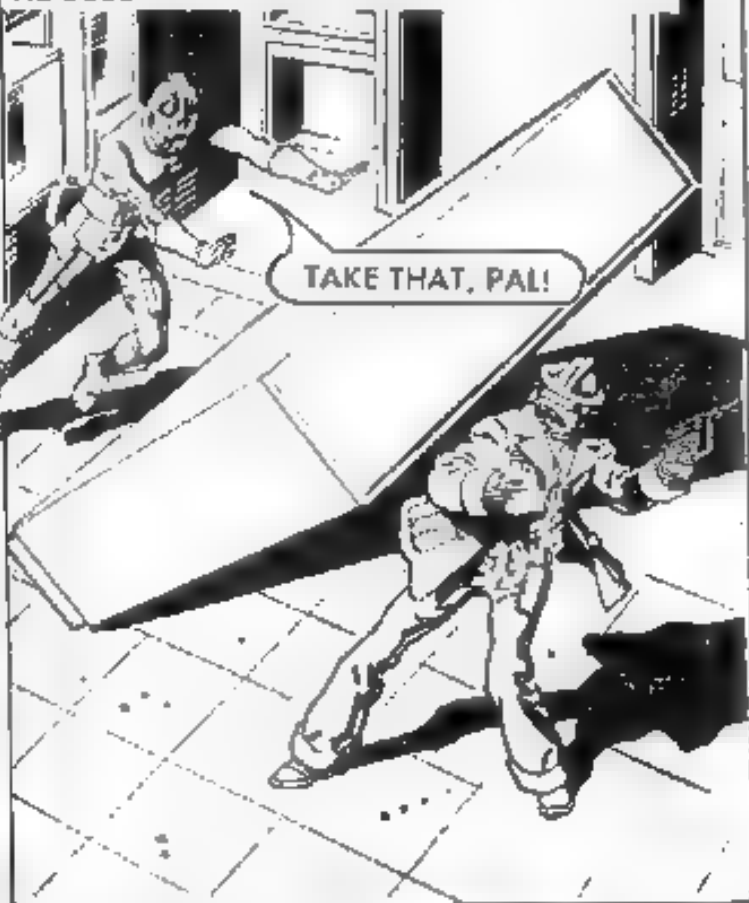
HE JUST NICKED ME THAT TIME! BUT IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE HE FINISHES ME OFF.



BLIND INSTINCT LED GOTH BACK TO THE MAIN CORRIDOR FROM THE CONTROL ROOM.



HE USED THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK—



THE HEAVY CABINET WOULD HAVE CRUSHED AN ORDINARY MAN.

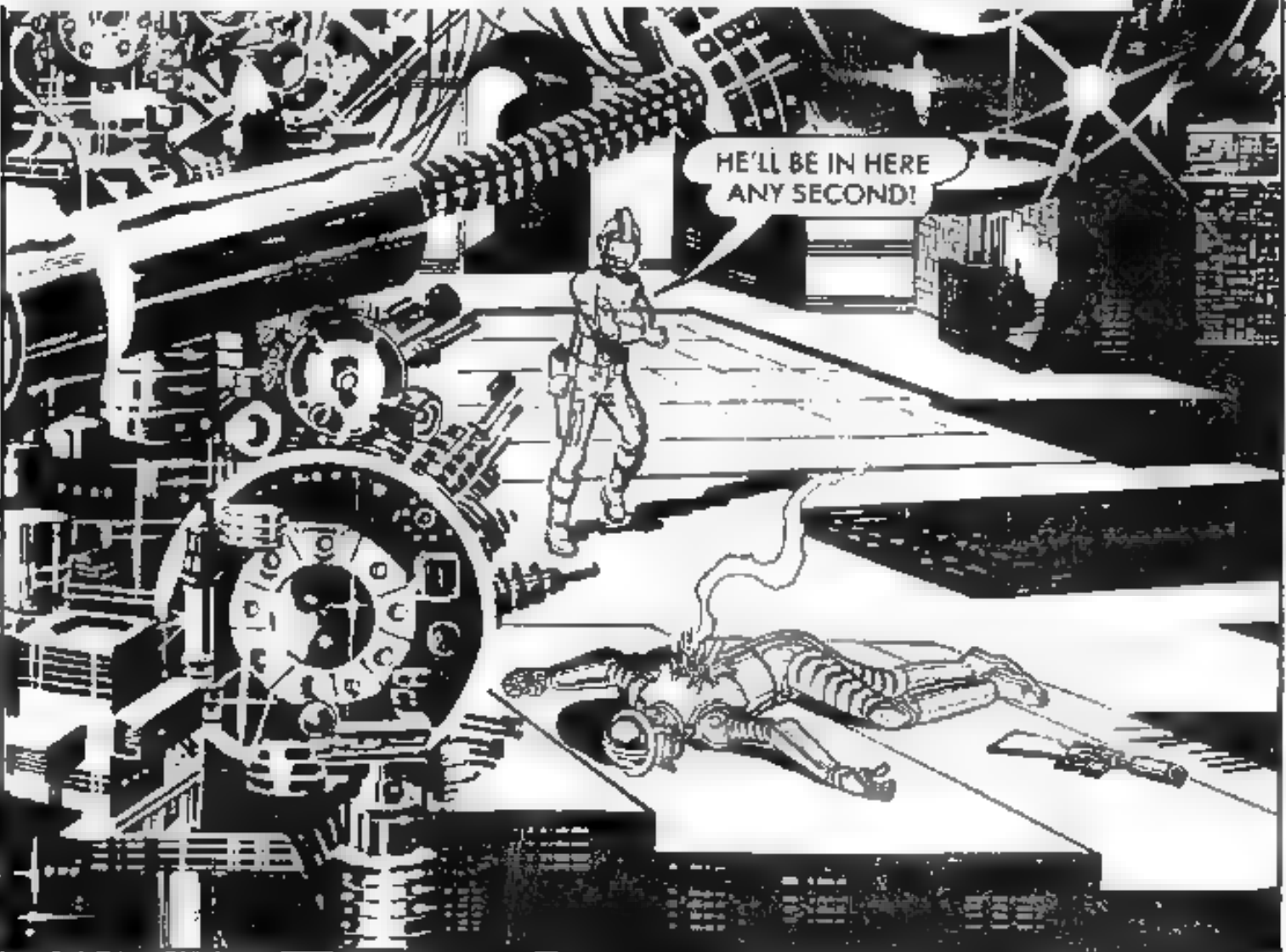
THAT WAS FOOLISH SINCE MY BODY IS CONSIDERABLY STRONGER THAN YOURS!





THE PISTOL!
WHERE IS IT?

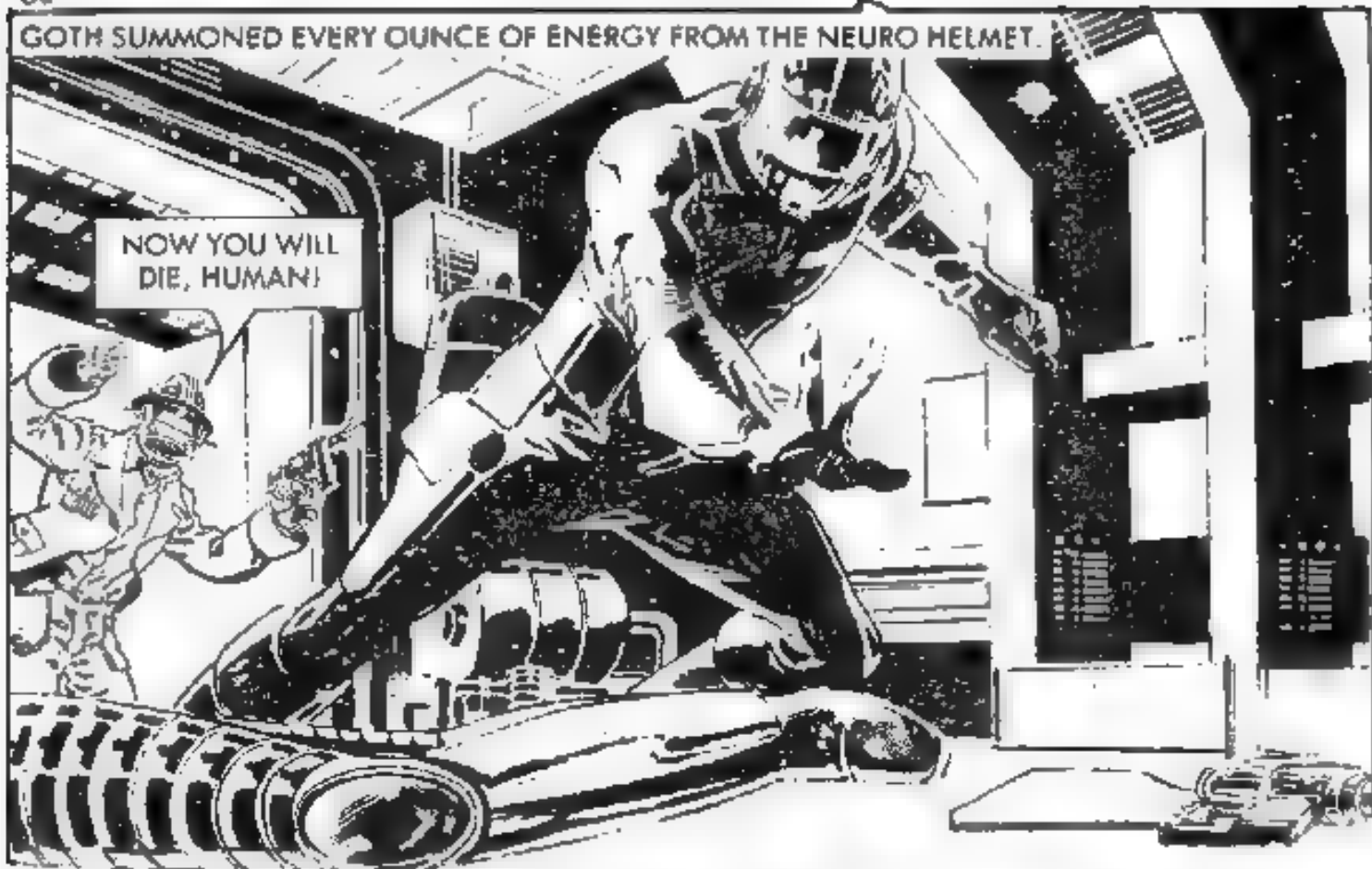
GOTH SPOTTED ONE OF THE ANDROID CREW TERMINATED BY HIS FORMER PARTNER!



HE'LL BE IN HERE
ANY SECOND!

GOth SUMMONED EVERY OUNCE OF ENERGY FROM THE NEURO HELMET.

NOW YOU WILL
DIE, HUMAN!



ONCE AGAIN GOth'S SPEED SAVED HIS LIFE.

MISSED!

YOU CANNOT HOPE TO DEFEAT
A SYGMA WARRIOR!





IT WAS GOTH'S COMPASSION FOR HIS FORMER PARTNER THAT ALMOST LED TO HIS DEATH, BUT THAT SAME COMPASSION MARKED THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM.

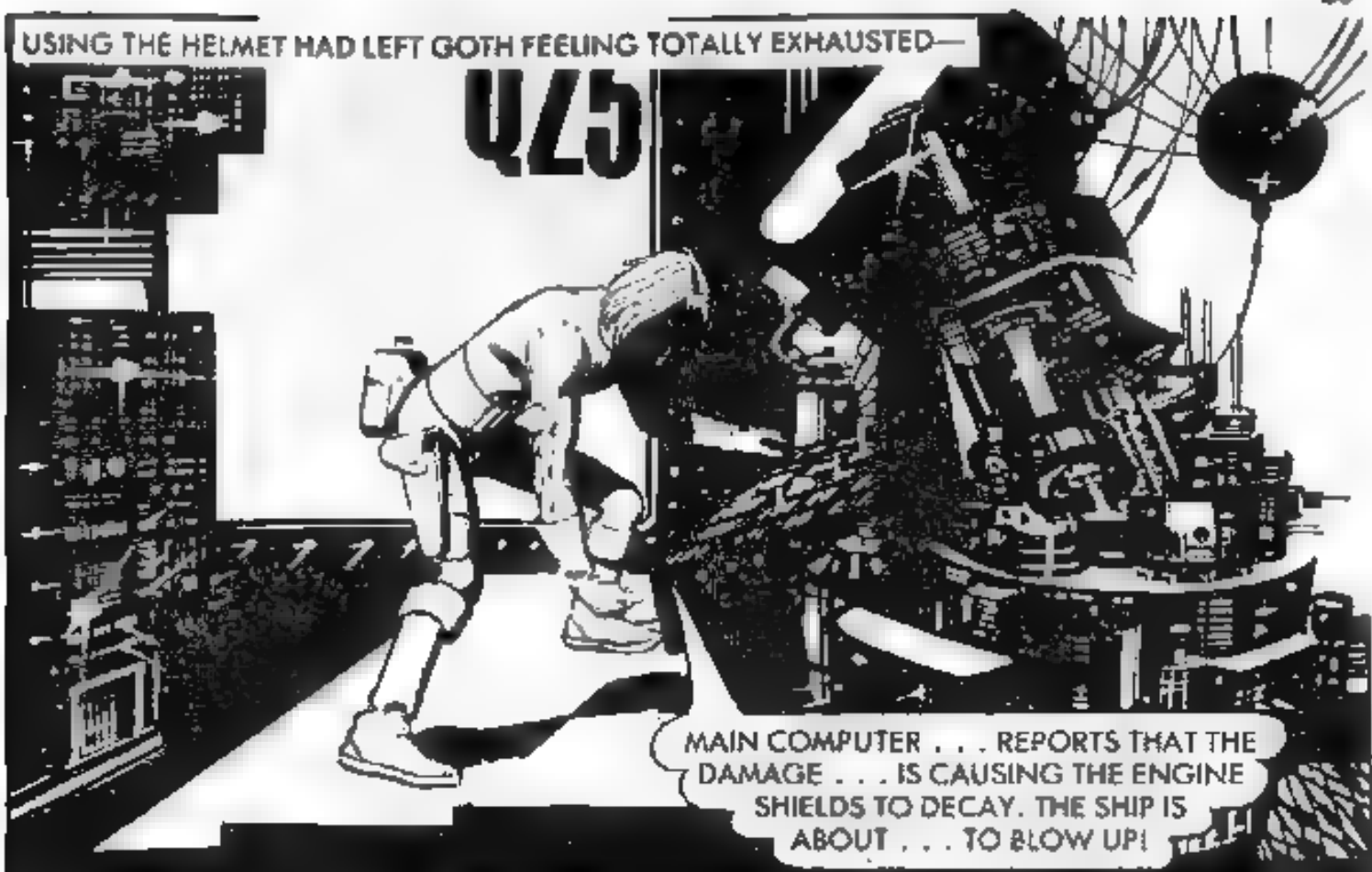
YOU WERE JUST A MACHINE OF DESTRUCTION.
IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT—IT WAS THE FAULT OF
THOSE WHO DESIGNED YOU.

JUST THEN . . .

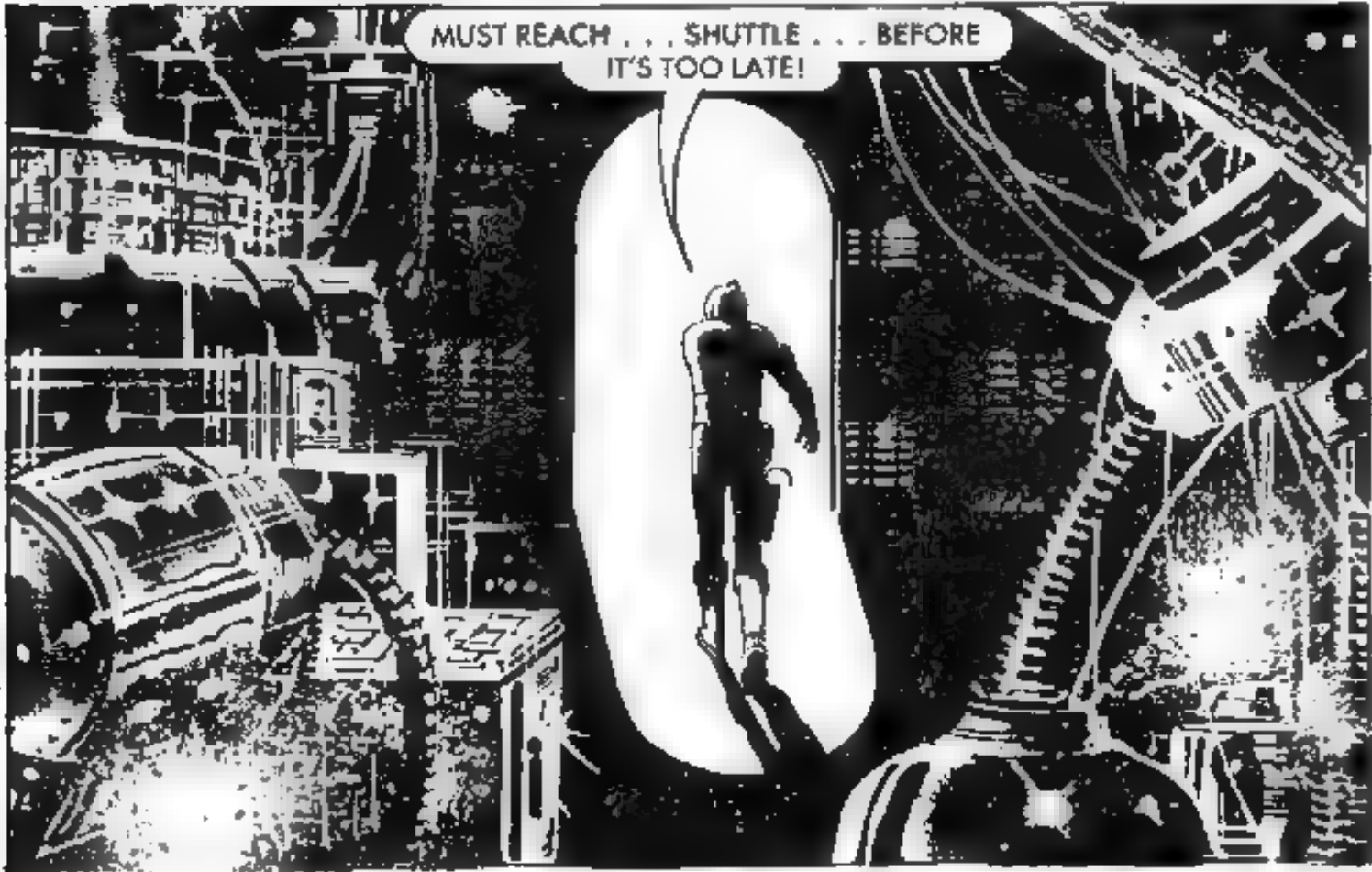
THAT ENERGY BEAM HE FIRED
MUST HAVE HIT THE CONTROLS!

USING THE HELMET HAD LEFT GOTH FEELING TOTALLY EXHAUSTED—

Q75



MAIN COMPUTER . . . REPORTS THAT THE
DAMAGE . . . IS CAUSING THE ENGINE
SHIELDS TO DECAY. THE SHIP IS
ABOUT . . . TO BLOW UP!



MUST REACH . . . SHUTTLE . . . BEFORE
IT'S TOO LATE!

ALARMS WERE RINGING ALL OVER THE SHIP.

I'M . . . SO TIRED.



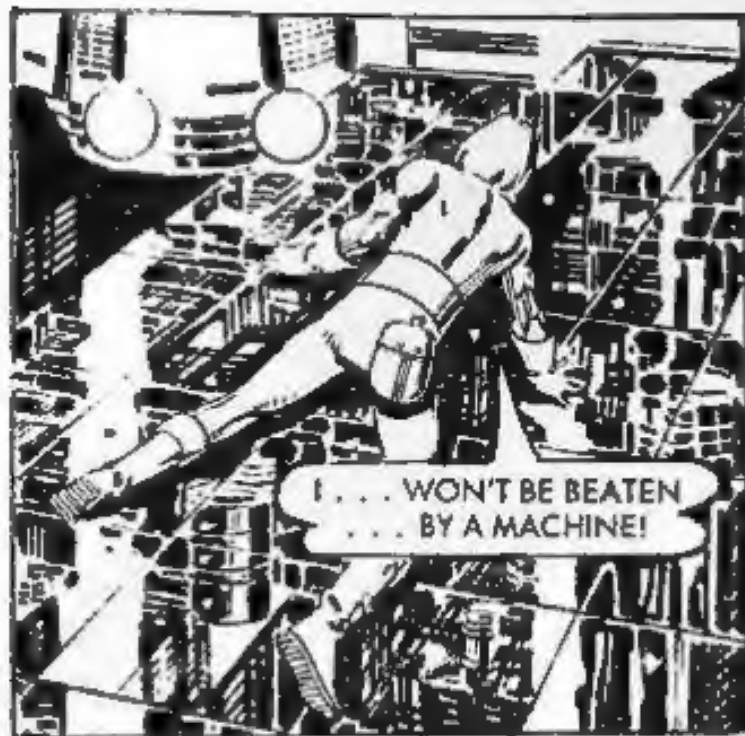
THE SHUTTLE WAS ONLY A FEW FEET AWAY,
BUT TO GOTH IT COULD HAVE BEEN ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE.



ON THE VERGE OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS GOTH REMEMBERED THE ANDROID'S WORDS.

YOU CANNOT DEFEAT A
SYGMA WARRIOR!





WITH SUPERHUMAN EFFORT GOTH MANAGED TO CRAWL INTO THE SHUTTLE AND BLAST OFF—

A FEW MONTHS LATER MAJOR GOTH WAS BACK ON ROUTINE PATROL.

THIS WILL BE BORING AFTER WHAT
YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH, SIR.

BORING, LAD? THERE'S NOTHING EXCITING ABOUT KILLING. WAR IS STUPID,
AND THE STUPIDEST PART OF THE WHOLE SITUATION IS THAT
GOVERNMENTS REALLY BELIEVE THAT POSSESSION OF THE ULTIMATE
WEAPON WILL GUARANTEE PEACE. IT'S UP TO US TO MAKE SURE THAT NO
NATION EVER POSSESSES THAT WEAPON.

DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S
OTHER *ACTION-PACKED*
ADVENTURE



NOW
ON
SALE



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STARBLAZER'S

GUIDE TO THE SPACEMEN

Soyuz 29 was launched on June 15, 1978 and the mission lasted 139 days 14 hours 48 mins. One of those on board was Alexander S. Ivanchenkov, 37, who also flew Soyuz T6 on a 7 day 22 hour 42 min. mission on June 24, 1982.

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